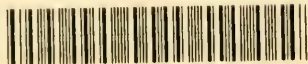


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At the Green Box.

Etched by J. Massard. — From drawing
by François Flameng.



INTERNATIONAL LIMITED EDITION

THE
MAN WHO LAUGHS

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II.

BY VICTOR HUGO



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON
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THE MAN WHO LAUGHS.

CONTENTS.

VOL. II.

BOOK III. — THE BEGINNING OF THE FISSURE.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE TADCASTER INN	1
II. OPEN-AIR ELOQUENCE	6
III. WHERE THE PASSER-BY REAPPEARS	12
IV. CONTRARIES FRATERNIZE IN HATE	19
V. THE WAPENTAKE	25
VI. THE MOUSE EXAMINED BY THE CATS	30
VII. WHY SHOULD A GOLD PIECE LOWER ITSELF BY MIXING WITH A HEAP OF PENNIES?	40
VIII. SYMPTOMS OF POISONING	48
IX. ABYSSUS ABYSSUM VOCAT	53

BOOK IV. — THE CELL OF TORTURE.

I. THE TEMPTATION OF SAINT GWYNPLAINE	63
II. FROM GAY TO GRAVE	72
III. LEX, REX, FEX	80
IV. URSUS PLAYS THE SPY ON THE POLICE	84
V. A FEARFUL PLACE	90
VI. THE KIND OF MAGISTRACY UNDER THE WIGS OF FORMER DAYS	93
VII. SHUDDERING	98
VIII. LAMENTATION	100

BOOK V. — THE SEA AND FATE ARE MOVED BY THE SAME
BREATH.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE DURABILITY OF FRAGILE THINGS	116
II. THE WAIF KNOWS ITS OWN COURSE	127
III. AN AWAKENING	141
IV. FASCINATION	145
V. WE THINK WE REMEMBER ; WE FORGET	153

BOOK VI. — URSUS UNDER DIFFERENT ASPECTS.

I. WHAT THE MISANTHROPE SAID	161
II. WHAT HE DID	166
III. COMPLICATIONS	180
IV. MŒNIBUS SURDIS CAMPANA MUTA	184
V. STATE POLICY DEALS WITH LITTLE MATTERS AS WELL AS WITH GREAT	191

BOOK VII. — THE TITANESS.

I. THE AWAKENING	202
II. THE RESEMBLANCE OF A PALACE TO A WOOD	206
III. EYE	211
IV. SATAN	220
V. THEY RECOGNIZE, BUT DO NOT KNOW, EACH OTHER	234

BOOK VIII. — THE CAPITOL AND THINGS AROUND IT.

I. ANALYSIS OF MAJESTIC MATTERS	238
II. IMPARTIALITY	254
III. THE OLD HALL	264
IV. THE OLD CHAMBER	271
V. ARISTOCRATIC GOSSIP	278
VI. THE HIGH AND THE LOW	288
VII. STORMS OF MEN ARE WORSE THAN STORMS OF OCEANS	293
VIII. HE WOULD BE A GOOD BROTHER, WERE HE NOT A GOOD SON	314

BOOK IX. — IN RUINS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. IT IS THROUGH EXCESS OF GREATNESS THAT MAN REACHES EXCESS OF MISERY	320
II. THE DREGS	325

CONCLUSION. — THE NIGHT AND THE SEA.

I. A WOLF MAY PROVE A GUARDIAN ANGEL	346
II. BARKILPHEDRO, HAVING AIMED AT THE EAGLE, BRINGS DOWN THE DOVE	351
III. PARADISE REGAINED BELOW	360
IV. NAY ; ON HIGH !	367

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL. II.

	PAGE
AT THE GREEN BOX	<i>Frontispiece</i>
IN THE TORTURE CHAMBER	103
THE FUNERAL PROCESSION	188
LORD CLANCHARLIE'S SPEECH	297
GWYNPLAINE BREAKING INTO TADCASTER INN	324

THE MAN WHO LAUGHS.

BOOK III.

THE BEGINNING OF THE FISSURE.

CHAPTER I.

THE TADCASTER INN.

AT that period London had but one bridge — London Bridge, with houses built upon it. This bridge united London with Southwark, a suburb paved with flint pebbles taken from the Thames, and divided into small streets and alleys, like the city, with a great number of buildings, houses, dwellings, and wooden huts jammed together, — a pell-mell mixture of combustible matter, with which fire might work its will, as 1666 had proved.

Southwark was then pronounced Soudric, it is now pronounced Sousouore, or near it; indeed, an excellent way of pronouncing English names is not to pronounce them. Thus, for Southampton, say, Stpntn. It was the time when "Chatham" was pronounced *je t'aime*. The Southwark of those days resembles the Southwark of to-day about as much as Vaugirard resembles Mar-seilles. It was then a village; it is now a city. Nevertheless, considerable business was carried on

there. The long old Cyclopean wall by the Thames was studded with rings, to which the river barges were anchored.

This wall was called the Effroc Wall. York, in Saxon times, was called Effroc. Legend says that a Duke of Effroc was once drowned at the foot of the wall. The water there certainly was deep enough to drown a duke. At low water it was six good fathoms deep. The excellence of this little anchorage attracted many sea vessels, and the old Dutch tub called the "Vograat" came to anchor at the Effroc Wall. The "Vograat" made the crossing from London to Rotterdam, and from Rotterdam to London, punctually once a week. Other barges started twice a day, either for Deptford, Greenwich, or Gravesend, going down with one tide and returning with the next. The voyage to Gravesend, though twenty miles, was made in six hours.

The "Vograat" was of a model no longer seen now, except in naval museums. It was almost a junk. At that time, while France copied Greece, Holland copied China. The "Vograat," a heavy hull with two masts, was partitioned perpendicularly, so as to be water-tight, having a narrow hold in the middle, and two decks, one fore and the other aft. The decks were flush, as in the iron turret-vessels of the present day,—the advantage of which is that in foul weather the force of the waves is diminished, and the disadvantage of which is that the crew is exposed to the action of the sea, owing to there being no bulwarks. There was nothing to save any one on board from falling into the sea. Hence the frequent losses of men, which caused the model to fall into disuse. The "Vograat" went to Holland direct, and did not even stop at Gravesend.

An old ridge of stones, solid rock as well as masonry, ran along the bottom of the Effroc Wall, and being pas-

sable at all tides, was used to board the ships moored to the wall. This wall was furnished with steps at intervals. It marked the southern limits of Southwark. An embankment at the top allowed the passers-by to rest their elbows on the Effroc Wall, as on the parapet of a quay. Thence they could look down on the Thames; on the other side of the river London dwindled away into fields.

A little way up the river above the Effroc Wall, at the bend in the Thames which is nearly opposite St. James's Palace, behind Lambeth House, not far from the walk then called Foxhall (Vauxhall, probably), there was, between a pottery in which they made porcelain, and a glass-blower's where they made ornamental bottles, one of those large unenclosed spaces covered with grass, called formerly in France *cultures* and *mails*, and in England bowling-greens. Of bowling-green, a green on which to roll a ball, the French have made *boulingrin*. Folks have this green inside their houses nowadays, only it is put on the table, is a cloth instead of turf, and is called billiards.

It is difficult to see why, having boulevard (*boulevard*), which is the same word as bowling-green, the French should have adopted *boulingrin*. It is surprising that anything as sensible as the Dictionary should indulge in useless luxuries.

The bowling-green of Southwark was called Tarrinzeau Field, because it once belonged to the Barons Hastings, who are also Barons Tarrinzeau and Mauchline. From the Lords Hastings the Tarrinzeau Field passed to the Lords Tadcaster, who made a speculation of it, just as, at a later date, a Duke of Orleans made a speculation of the Palais Royal. Tarrinzeau Field afterwards became waste ground and parochial property. Tarrinzeau Field was a kind of permanent fair-ground, frequented by

jugglers, athletes, mountebanks, and strolling musicians, and always full of "fools going to look at the devil," as Archbishop Sharpe said. To look at the devil meant to go to the play.

Several inns, which harboured the public and sent them to these outlandish exhibitions, were established in this place, which kept holiday all the year round, and thereby prospered. These inns were simply stalls, occupied only during the day. In the evening the tavern-keeper put the key of the tavern in his pocket and went away. There was but one permanent dwelling on the whole green, the vans on the fair-ground being likely to disappear at any moment, by reason of the absence of any home ties and the vagabond life of all mountebanks. Mountebanks have no roots to their lives.

This inn, called the Tadcaster, after the former owners of the ground, was an inn rather than a tavern, a hotel rather than an inn, and had a carriage entrance and a large yard. The carriage entrance, opening from the court on the field, was the legitimate door of the Tadcaster Inn, which had besides, at the farther end, a small, low door, by which people entered. This small door was the only one used. It opened into a large tap-room, full of tobacco smoke, furnished with tables, and low of ceiling. Over it was a window, to the iron bars of which was fastened and hung the sign of the inn. The principal door was barred and bolted, and always remained closed. It was thus necessary to cross the tavern to enter the courtyard.

At the Tadcaster Inn there was a landlord and a boy. The landlord was called Master Nicless; the boy, Govicum. Master Nicless — Nicholas, doubtless, which the English habit of contraction had made Nicless — was a miserly widower, but one who respected and feared the

laws. As to his appearance, he had bushy eyebrows and hairy hands. The boy, aged fourteen, who poured out drink, and answered to the name of Govicum, wore a merry face and an apron. His hair was cropped close, — a sign of servitude. He slept on the ground-floor, in a nook in which they formerly kept a dog. This nook had for a window a bull's-eye looking out on the green.

CHAPTER II.

OPEN-AIR ELOQUENCE.

ONE very cold and windy evening, when there was every reason that folks should hasten on their way along the streets, a man who was walking in Tarrinzeau Field close under the walls of the tavern, stopped suddenly. It was during the last months of the winter of 1704 and 1705. This man, who wore the garb of a sailor, was of good mien and fine figure,—things imperative to courtiers, and not forbidden to common folk.

Why did he stop? To listen. To what? To a voice apparently speaking in the court on the other side of the wall,—a voice a little weakened by age, but so powerful, notwithstanding, that it reached the passer-by in the street. At the same time might be heard in the enclosure, from which the voice came, the hubbub of a crowd. This voice said:—

“Men and women of London, here I am! I sincerely congratulate you on being English. You are a great nation; I say more,—you are a great people. Your fisticuffs are even better than your sword-thrusts. You have an appetite. You are a nation that devours other nations,—a magnificent function! As politicians and philosophers, in the management of colonies, populations, and industry, and in the desire to do others any harm which may turn to your own good, you stand pre-eminent. The hour will come when two boards will be put up on earth; on one will be inscribed ‘Men,’ on

the other, 'Englishmen.' I mention this to your glory, — I, who am neither English nor human, having the honour to be a bear. Still more — I am a doctor. That follows. Gentlemen, I teach. What? Two kinds of things, — things which I know, and things which I do not know. I sell my drugs, and I sell my ideas. Approach and listen. Science invites you. Open your ear: if it is small, it will hold but little truth; if large, a great deal of folly will find its way in. Now, then, attention! I teach the *Pseudoxia Epidemica*. I have a comrade who will make you laugh, but I can make you think. We live in the same box, laughter being of quite as old a family as thought. When people asked Democritus, 'How do you know?' he answered, 'I laugh.' And if I am asked, 'Why do you laugh?' I shall answer, 'I know.' However, I am not laughing. I am a corrector of popular errors. I take upon myself the task of cleaning your intellects. They require it. Heaven permits people to deceive themselves, and to be deceived. It is useless to be absurdly modest. I frankly avow that I believe in Providence, even where it is wrong. But when I see filth (errors are filth) I brush it away. How am I sure of what I know? That concerns only myself. Every one catches wisdom as he can. Lactantius asked questions of, and received answers from, a bronze head of Virgil. Sylvester II. conversed with birds. Did the birds speak? Did the Pope twitter? That is a question. The dead child of the Rabbi Eleazer talked to Saint Augustin. Between ourselves, I doubt all these facts except the last. The dead child might perhaps talk, because under its tongue it had a gold plate, on which were engraved divers constellations. Thus he deceived people. The fact explains itself. You see my moderation. I separate the true from the false. See! here are other errors which

no doubt you share, poor ignorant folks that you are, and from which I wish to free you. Dioscorides believed that there was a god in henbane; Chrysippus in cynopaste; Josephus in the root bauras; Homer in the plant moly. They were all wrong. The spirits in herbs are not gods but devils. I have tested this fact. It is not true that the serpent which tempted Eve had a human face, as Cadmus relates. Garcias de Horto, Cadamosto, and John Hugo, Archbishop of Trèves, deny that it is sufficient to cut down a tree to catch an elephant. I incline to their opinion. Citizens, the efforts of Lucifer are the cause of all false impressions. Under the reign of such a prince it is natural that meteors of error and of perdition should appear. My friends, Claudius Pulcher did not die because the fowls refused to come out of the fowl house. The fact is, that Lucifer, having foreseen the death of Claudius Pulcher, took care to prevent the birds feeding. That Beelzebub gave the Emperor Vespasian the virtue of curing the lame and giving sight to the blind, by his touch, was an act praiseworthy in itself, but the motive was culpable. Gentlemen, distrust those false doctors who sell the root of the briony and the white snake, and who make washes with honey and the blood of a cock. When Saint George killed the dragon he had not the daughter of a saint standing by his side. Saint Jerome had not, a clock on the chimney-piece of his study; first, because, living in a cave, he had no study; secondly, because he had no chimney-piece; thirdly, because clocks were not yet invented. Let us put these things straight. O gentlefolks who listen to me, if any one tells you that a lizard will be born in your head if you smell the herb valerian; that the rotting carcass of the ox changes into bees, and that of the horse into hornets; that a man weighs more when dead than when alive; that the blood

of the he-goat dissolves emeralds; that a caterpillar, a fly, and a spider, seen on the same tree, presage famine, war, and pestilence; that the falling sickness is to be cured by a worm found in the head of a buck, — do not believe him. These things are errors. But now listen to truths. The skin of a sea-calf is a safeguard against thunder. The toad feeds upon earth, which causes a stone to come into his head. The rose of Jericho blooms on Christmas-eve. Serpents cannot endure the shadow of the ash-tree. The elephant has no joints, and sleeps resting against a tree. Make a toad sit upon a cock's egg and he will hatch a scorpion which will turn into a salamander. A blind person will regain sight by putting one hand on the left side of the altar and the other on his eyes. Virginity does not prevent maternity. Honest people, lay these truths to heart. Above all, you can believe in Providence in two ways, — either as thirst believes in the orange, or as the ass believes in the whip. Now I am going to introduce you to my family."

Here a violent gust of wind shook the window-frames and shutters of the inn. The orator paused a moment, and then resumed:—

"An interruption; very good. Speak, north wind. Gentlemen, I am not angry. The wind is loquacious, like all solitary creatures. There is no one to keep him company up there, so he jabbers. I resume the thread of my discourse. Here you see an association of artists. There are four of us,—*a lupo principium*. I begin with my friend, who is a wolf. He does not conceal it. Look at him! He is educated, grave, and sagacious. Providence, perhaps, entertained for a moment the idea of making him a doctor of the university; but for that one must be rather stupid, and that he is not. I may add that he has no prejudices, and is not aristocratic in

his notions. Homo is a dog made perfect. Let us venerate the dog. The dog — curious animal! — sweats with its tongue and smiles with its tail. Gentlemen, Homo equals in wisdom, and surpasses in cordiality, the hairless wolf of Mexico, the wonderful xoloitzeniski. I may add that he is humble. He has the modesty of a wolf who is useful to men. He is helpful and charitable, and says nothing about it. His left paw knows not the good which his right paw does. These are his merits. Of the other, my second friend, I have but a word to say. He is a monster. You will admire him. He was abandoned years ago by pirates on the shores of the wild ocean. This third one is blind. Is she an exception to the general rule? No, we are all blind. The miser is blind; he sees gold, but he does not see true riches. The prodigal is blind; he sees the beginning, but not the end. The coquette is blind; she does not see her own wrinkles. The learned man is blind; he does not see his own ignorance. The honest man is blind; he does not see the thief. The thief is blind; he does not see God. God is blind; the day he created the world he did not see the devil manage to creep into it. I myself am blind; I speak, and do not see that you are deaf. This blind girl who accompanies us is a mysterious priestess. Vesta has confided her torch to her. She has in her character depths as soft as a division in the wool of a sheep. I believe her to be a king's daughter, though I do not assert it as a fact. A laudable distrust is an attribute of wisdom. For my own part, I reason and I doctor, I think and I heal. *Chirurgus sum*. I cure fevers, miasmas, and plagues. Almost all our melancholy and sufferings are issues, which if carefully treated relieve us quietly of other evils which might be worse. All the same I do not recommend you to have an anthrax, otherwise called a carbuncle. It is a stupid malady,

and serves no good end. One dies of it, — that is all. I am no ignorant boor; I honour eloquence and poetry, and live in an innocent union with these goddesses. I will conclude with a piece of advice. Ladies and gentlemen, on the sunny side of your dispositions cultivate virtue, modesty, honesty, probity, justice, and love. Each one here below may thus have his little pot of flowers on his window-sill. My lords and gentlemen, I have spoken. The play is about to begin."

The man dressed as a sailor, who had been listening outside, entered the tap-room of the inn, crossed it, paid the necessary entrance money, stepped into the courtyard, which was full of people, saw at the farther end of it a huge van on wheels, wide open, and on the platform an old man dressed in a bearskin, a young man with a face like a horrible mask, a blind girl, and a wolf.

"Gracious heaven, what amusing people!" he cried.

CHAPTER III.

WHERE THE PASSER-BY REAPPEARS.

THE Green Box, as we have just seen, had arrived in London, and was now established in Southwark. Ursus had been tempted by the bowling-green, which had one great recommendation,—it was always fair-day there, even in winter.

The dome of St. Paul's was a delight to Ursus. London, take it all in all, has some good in it. It was a brave thing to dedicate a cathedral to Saint Paul. The real cathedral saint is Saint Peter. Saint Paul is suspected of imagination, and in matters ecclesiastical imagination means heresy. Saint Paul is a saint only by virtue of extenuating circumstances. He entered heaven only through the artists' door. A cathedral is a sign. St. Peter is the sign of Rome, the city of dogma; St. Paul that of London, the city of schism.

Ursus, whose philosophy had arms so long that it embraced everything, was a man who appreciated these shades of difference; and his attraction towards London arose, perhaps, from a certain admiration for Saint Paul.

The yard of the Tadcaster Inn had taken Ursus' fancy. It might have been made for the Green Box. It was a theatre ready-made. It was square, enclosed by the inn on three sides and on the fourth by a wall. Against this wall was placed the Green Box, which they had been able to draw into the yard, owing to the height of the gate.

A large wooden piazza roofed over, and supported on posts, on which the rooms of the first story opened, ran round the three sides of the interior façade of the house, making two right angles. The windows of the ground-floor made boxes, the pavement of the court, the pit; and the balcony the gallery. The Green Box, placed against the wall, had quite an audience hall in front of it. It was very like the Globe, where they played "Othello," "King Lear," and "The Tempest." In a corner behind the Green Box there was a stable. Ursus had made his arrangements with the tavern-keeper, Master Nicless, who, owing to his respect for the law, would not admit the wolf without charging him extra.

The placard, "GWYNPLAINE, THE LAUGHING MAN," taken from its nail in the Green Box, was hung up close to the sign of the inn. The sitting-room of the tavern had, as we have seen, an inside door, which opened into the court. By the door was constructed off-hand, by means of an empty barrel, an office for the door-keeper, who was sometimes Fibi, and sometimes Vinos. It was managed much as at present,—pay and pass in. Under the placard announcing the LAUGHING MAN was a piece of wood, painted white, on which was written with charcoal in large letters the title of Ursus' grand piece, "Chaos Vanquished." In the centre of the balcony, precisely opposite the Green Box, and in a compartment having for an entrance a window reaching to the ground, there had been partitioned off a space "for the nobility." It was large enough to hold two rows of spectators, ten in each row. "We are in London," said Ursus. "We must be prepared for the gentry." He had furnished this box with the best chairs in the inn, and had placed in the centre a large arm-chair covered with plush, in case some alderman's wife should come.

They began their performances. The crowd immedi-

ately flocked to them, but the compartment for the nobility remained empty. With that exception their success became so great that no showman had ever seen anything to equal it. All Southwark ran in crowds to admire the Laughing Man.

The merry-andrews and mountebanks of Tarrinzeau Field were aghast at Gwynplaine. The effect he created was similar to that of a sparrow-hawk flapping his wings in a cage of goldfinches, and feeding in their seed-trough. Gwynplaine gobbled up their patrons. Besides the small fry, such as the swallowers of swords and the grimace makers, real performances took place on the green. There was a circus resounding from morning till night with the blare of all sorts of instruments, — psalteries, drums, rebecks, micamons, timbrels, reeds, dulcimers, gongs, chevrettes, bagpipes, German horns, English eschaqueils, pipes, flutes, and flageolets. In a large round tent were some tumblers, who could not equal our present climbers of the Pyrenees, — Dulma, Bordenave, and Meylonga, — who descend from the peak of Pierrefitte to the plateau of Limaçon, an almost perpendicular height. There was a travelling menagerie, with a performing tiger, who, when struck by the keeper, snapped at the whip and tried to swallow the lash. But even this comedian with jaws and claws was eclipsed in success. Curiosity, applause, receipts, crowds, — the Laughing Man monopolized everything. It all came about in the twinkling of an eye. Nothing was thought of but the Green Box.

“ ‘Chaos Vanquished’ is ‘Chaos Victor,’ ” said Urrus, appropriating half Gwynplaine’s success, and thus taking the wind out of his sails, as they say at sea. The success was prodigious. Still, it remained local. Fame does not cross the sea easily. It took a hundred and thirty years for the name of Shakspeare to penetrate

from England into France. The sea is a wall; and if Voltaire — a thing which he very much regretted having done when it was too late — had not built a bridge over to Shakspeare, Shakspeare might still be in England, on the other side of the wall, the captive of an insular glory.

The glory of Gwynplaine had not crossed London Bridge. It was not great enough to re-echo through the city, — at least not yet. But Southwark ought to have sufficed to satisfy the ambition of a clown.

“The money bag grows perceptibly heavier,” Ursus remarked one day.

They played “Ursus Rursus” and “Chaos Vanquished.” Between the acts, Ursus exhibited his power as an en-gastrimythist, and executed marvels of ventriloquism. He imitated every sound heard in the audience, each snatch of song or exclamation, so perfectly as to amaze and startle the speaker or singer himself; and now and then he copied the hubbub of the public, and whistled as if there were a crowd of people within him. These were remarkable talents. Besides this, he harangued like Cicero, as we have just seen, sold his drugs, prescribed for maladies, and even healed the sick. Southwark was enthralled.

Ursus was satisfied, but by no means astonished with the applause of Southwark. “They are the ancient Trinobantes,” he said. Then he added, “I must not confound them, for delicacy of taste, with the Atrobates, who people Berkshire, the Belgians, who inhabited Somersetshire, or the Parisians, who founded York.”

At every performance the yard of the inn, transformed into a pit, was filled with a ragged and enthusiastic audience. It was composed of watermen, chairmen, coachmen, and bargemen and sailors, just ashore, spending their wages in feasting and debauchery. In it there were

felons, ruffians, and blackguards, — these last soldiers condemned for some breach of discipline to wear their red coats, which were lined with black, inside out, hence the name of blackguard, which the French turn into *blagueurs*. All these flowed from the street into the theatre, and poured back from the theatre into the tap-room. The emptying of tankards did not decrease the company's success.

Amid what it is customary to call the scum, there was one taller than the rest, bigger, stronger, less poverty-stricken, broader in the shoulders; dressed like the common people, but not ragged; admiring and applauding everything to the skies, clearing his way with his fists, wearing a disordered periwig, swearing, shouting, joking, never dirty, and, if need be, ready to blacken an eye or pay for a bottle. This frequenter was the passer-by whose enthusiastic remark has already been recorded.

This connoisseur seemed to have taken an immense fancy to the Laughing Man. He did not attend every performance, but when he came he led the public; applause grew into acclamation; success soared not to the roof, for there was none, but to the clouds, for there were plenty of them, — which clouds (seeing that there was no roof) sometimes wept over the masterpiece of Ursus. His enthusiasm caused Ursus to notice this man, and Gwynplaine too observed him. They had a great friend in this unknown visitor. Ursus and Gwynplaine wanted to know him, — or at least to know who he was.

One evening Ursus, being in the side scene, which was the kitchen-door of the Green Box, and seeing Master Nicless standing by him, pointed this man out to the tavern-keeper and asked, —

“Do you know that man?”

"Of course I do."

"Who is he?"

"A sailor."

"What is his name?" said Gwynplaine, interrupting.

"Tom-Jim-Jack," replied the inn-keeper.

Then, as he re-descended the steps at the back of the Green Box, to enter the inn, Master Nicless let fall this profound reflection, so deep as to be unintelligible: "What a pity that he is not a lord! He would make a famous scoundrel."

Otherwise, although established in the tavern, the group in the Green Box had in no way altered their manner of living, and maintained their isolated habits. Except a few words exchanged now and then with the tavern-keeper, they held no communication with any of the persons who were living, either permanently or temporarily, in the inn; and continued to hold themselves rigorously aloof.

During their stay at Southwark, Gwynplaine had made it his habit, after the performance and the supper of both family and horses,—when Ursus and Dea had gone to bed in their respective apartments,—to enjoy the fresh air of the bowling-green a little, between eleven o'clock and midnight. A certain restlessness of spirit impels us to take walks at night, and to saunter about under the stars. There is a mysterious expectancy in youth. Hence it is that we are prone to wander out in the night, without an object. At that hour there was no one in the fair-ground, except, perhaps, some reeling drunkard, making wavering shadows in dark corners. The empty taverns were shut up, and the lower room in the Tadcaster Inn was dark, except where, in some corner, a solitary candle lighted a last reveller. A faint light gleamed through the window-shutters of the half-closed tavern as Gwynplaine, pen-

sive, content, and dreaming, enveloped in a haze of divine joy, paced backwards and forwards in front of the half-open door. Of what was he thinking? Of Dea — of nothing — of everything. He never wandered far from the Green Box, being held, as by an invisible thread, to Dea. A few steps away from it was far enough for him. When he returned, he generally found all the inmates of the Green Box asleep, and so went straight to bed himself.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTRARIES FRATERNIZE IN HATE.

THE success of others is odious in the sight of those whom it injures. The eaten rarely adore the eaters.

The Laughing Man had made a decided hit. The mountebanks around were indignant. A theatrical success is a siphon,—it draws in the crowd and creates emptiness all round. The show opposite is ruined. The increased receipts of the Green Box caused a corresponding decrease in the receipts of the surrounding shows. These entertainments, which had been very popular up to that time, suddenly collapsed. It was like a low-water mark, showing inversely, but in perfect concordance, the rise here, the fall there. Theatres experience the effect of the tides, which rise in one only on condition of falling in another.

The strolling players who exhibited their talents and musical accomplishments on the neighbouring platforms, seeing themselves ruined by the Laughing Man, were wild with despair, though dazzled. All the grimacers, all the clowns, all the merry-andrews envied Gwynplaine. How happy he must be with a snout like a wild beast! The buffoon mothers and dancers on the tight-rope, with pretty children, looked at them in anger, and pointing out Gwynplaine, would say, "What a pity you have not a face like that!" Some even beat their babies savagely for being pretty.

More than one, had she known the secret, would have fashioned her son's face in the Gwynplaine style. The head of an angel, which brings no money in, is not as desirable as that of a paying demon. One day the mother of a little child who was a marvel of beauty, and who acted the part of a cupid, exclaimed:—

“Our children are failures! A Gwynplaine alone is successful.” And shaking her fist at her son, she added, “If I only knew your father, would n't he catch it!”

Gwynplaine was the goose with the golden eggs. What a marvellous phenomenon! There was an uproar through all the caravans. The mountebanks, at once enthusiastic and exasperated, looked at Gwynplaine and gnashed their teeth. Admiring anger is called envy. How it howls! They tried to break up “Chaos Vanquished;” made a cabal, hissed, yelled, and shouted. This gave Ursus an excuse to make out-of-door harangues to the populace, and for his friend Tom-Jim-Jack to use his fists to re-establish order. His pugilistic marks of friendship brought him still more under the notice and regard of Ursus and Gwynplaine, — at a distance, however; for the party in the Green Box sufficed to themselves, and held aloof from the rest of the world, and because Tom-Jim-Jack, the leader of the mob, seemed a sort of lordly bully, without a tie, without a friend; a smasher of windows, a manager of men, now here, now gone, hail-fellow-well-met with every one, companion of none.

This raging envy against Gwynplaine was not quelled by a few friendly blows from Tom-Jim-Jack. Violence having failed, the mountebanks of Tarrinzeau Field fell back on a petition. They appealed to the authorities. This is the usual course. Against an unpleasant success we first try to stir up the crowd, and then we petition to the magistrate.

The reverends allied themselves with the merry-andrews. The Laughing Man had inflicted a blow on the preachers. There were empty places not only in the shows, but in the churches. The congregations in the churches of the five parishes in Southwark had dwindled away. People left before the sermon to go to see Gwynplaine. "Chaos Vanquished," the Green Box, the Laughing Man, all the abominations of Baal, eclipsed the eloquence of the pulpit. The voice crying in the desert,—*vox clamantis in deserto*,—is discontented, and is prone to call in the aid of the authorities. The clergy of the five parishes complained to the Bishop of London, who in turn complained to her Majesty.

The complaint of the merry-andrews was based on religion. They declared it to be insulted. They described Gwynplaine as a sorcerer, and Ursus as an atheist. The reverend gentlemen invoked social order. Setting orthodoxy aside, they took action on the fact that acts of parliament were violated. This was clever, for it was in the time of Mr. Locke, who had died only six months previous,—October 28, 1704,—and when the scepticism which Bolingbroke had instilled into Voltaire was taking root. Later on Wesley came and restored the Bible, as Loyola restored papacy.

Thus the Green Box was attacked on all sides,—by the merry-andrews, in the name of the Pentateuch, and by chaplains in the name of social order; in the name of Heaven and of the inspectors of nuisances,—the reverends espousing the cause of the police, and the mountebanks that of Heaven. The Green Box was denounced by the priests as a disturbing element, and by the jugglers as sacrilegious.

Had they any pretext? Was there any excuse? Yes. What was the objection? This: the wolf. A dog was allowable; a wolf forbidden. In England the wolf is

an outlaw. England permits the dog which barks, but not the dog which howls, — that being the distinction between the denizen of the yard and the woods. The rectors and vicars of the five parishes of Southwark called attention in their petitions to numerous parliamentary and royal statutes putting the wolf beyond the protection of the law. They moved for something like the imprisonment of Gwynplaine and the execution of the wolf, or at any rate for their banishment. The question was one of public importance, the danger to persons passing, etc. And on this point they appealed to the Faculty. They cited the opinion of the eighty physicians of London, — a learned body which dates from Henry VIII., which has a seal like that of the State, which can raise sick people to the dignity of criminals, which has the right to imprison those who infringe its laws and ignore its ordinances, and which, among other useful regulations for the welfare of citizens, establishes beyond a doubt this discovery of science; namely, if a wolf sees a man first, the man becomes hoarse for life. Besides, he may be bitten.

Homo, then, was the pretext.

Ursus heard of these designs through the inn-keeper. He was uneasy. He was afraid of the police and the justices. To be afraid of the magistracy, it suffices to be timid; there is no need to be guilty. Ursus had no desire for contact with sheriffs, provosts, bailiffs, and coroners. His eagerness to make their acquaintance amounted to nil. His curiosity to see the magistrates was about as great as the hare's to see the greyhound. He began to regret that he had come to London. " 'Better' is the enemy of 'good,' " murmured he apart. " I thought there was no truth in the proverb. I was wrong. Stupid sayings seem to be true after all. "

Against the coalition of powers, — merry-andrews es-

pousing the cause of religion, and chaplains indignant in behalf of medicine,—the poor Green Box, suspected of sorcery in Gwynplaine and of hydrophobia in Homo, had only one thing in its favour (a thing of great power in England however): municipal inactivity. It is to an inclination on the part of the local authorities to let things take their course that Englishmen owe their liberty. Liberty in England behaves very much like the sea around England. The tide rises. Little by little customs surmount the law. A cruel system of legislation drowned under the wave of custom; a savage code of laws still visible through the transparency of universal liberty: such is England.

The Laughing Man, "Chaos Vanquished," and Homo might have mountebanks, preachers, bishops, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, her Majesty, London, and the whole of England against them, and remain undisturbed so long as Southwark sided with them. The Green Box was the favourite amusement of the suburb, and the local authorities seemed disinclined to interfere. In England, indifference is protection. So long as the sheriff of the county of Surrey in whose jurisdiction Southwark belongs, did not move in the matter, Ursus breathed freely, and Homo could sleep on in peace.

So long as the hatred which the show excited did not occasion acts of violence, it increased its success. The Green Box was none the worse for it, as yet. On the contrary, the rumours that were rife only increased public curiosity, and the Laughing Man became more and more popular. The public follow with gusto the scent of anything contraband. To be suspected is a recommendation. The people adopt by instinct that at which the finger is pointed. The thing which is denounced is like the savour of forbidden fruit; we long

to taste it. Besides, applause which irritates some one, especially if that some one is in authority, is sweet. To perform, while passing a pleasant evening, both an act of kindness to the oppressed, and of opposition to the oppressor, is agreeable. You are protecting at the same time that you are being amused. So the theatrical caravans on the bowling-green continued to howl and to cabal against the Laughing Man. Nothing could have been more certain to enhance his success. The shouts of one's enemies are useful in giving point and vitality to one's triumph. A friend wearies sooner in praise than an enemy in abuse. To abuse does not hurt. Enemies are ignorant of this fact. They cannot help insulting us, and therein lies their usefulness. They cannot hold their tongues, and thus keep the public awake. The crowds which flocked to "Chaos Vanquished" increased daily.

Ursus kept what Master Nicless had said of intriguers and complaints in high places to himself, and did not tell Gwynplaine, lest it should impair the ease of his acting by creating anxiety. If evil was to come, he would be sure to know it soon enough.

CHAPTER V.

THE WAPENTAKE.

ONCE, however, he felt it his duty to deviate from this prudent course, thinking that it might be well to make Gwynplaine a little uneasy. It is true that this idea arose from a circumstance much graver, in the opinion of Ursus, than the cabals of his fellow showmen or of the church.

Gwynplaine, as he picked up a farthing, which had fallen when counting the receipts, had, in the presence of the inn-keeper, drawn a contrast between the farthing, representing the misery of the people, and the die, representing (under the figure of Anne) the parasitical magnificence of the throne, — an ill-sounding speech. This observation was repeated by Master Nicless, and had such a run that it reached Ursus through Fibi and Vinos. It put Ursus into a fever. Seditious words, *lèse Majesté*. He took Gwynplaine severely to task :

“ Watch over your abominable tongue. There is a rule for the great, — ‘ Do nothing ; ’ and a rule for the small, — ‘ Say nothing. ’ The poor man has but one friend, silence. He should pronounce only one syllable, ‘ Yes. ’ To confess and to consent is all the right he has. He should say ‘ Yes ’ to the judge ; ‘ Yes ’ to the king. Great people can beat us, if it so pleases them. I have received blows from them. It is their prerogative ; and they lose nothing of their greatness by breaking our bones. The ossifrage is a species of eagle.

Let us respect the sceptre, which is the chief of staves. Respect is prudence, and mediocrity is safety. To insult the king is to put one's self in the same danger as a girl who rashly attempts to pare the nails of a lion. They tell me that you have been prattling about the farthing, which is the same thing as the liard, and that you have found fault with the august medallion for which they sell us at market the eighth part of a salt herring. Take care! let us be serious. Consider the existence of pains and penalties. Suck in these legislative truths. You are in a country in which the man who cuts down a tree three years old is quietly taken off to the gallows. As to swearers, their feet are put into the stocks. The drunkard is shut up in a barrel, with the bottom out so that he can walk, with a hole in the top through which his head is passed, and with two in the sides for his hands, so that he cannot lie down. He who strikes another man in Westminster Hall is imprisoned for life and has his goods confiscated. Whoever strikes any one in the king's palace has his hand cut off. A fillip on the nose chances to bleed, and, behold! you are maimed for life. He who is convicted of heresy in the bishop's court is burnt alive. It was for no great crime that Cuthbert Simpson was quartered on a turnstile. Three years since, in 1702, not so very long ago you see, they placed in the pillory a scoundrel called Daniel Defoe, who had the audacity to print the names of the Members of Parliament who had spoken on the previous evening. He who commits high treason is disembowelled alive, and they tear out his heart and buffet his cheeks with it. Impress these notions of right and justice on your mind. Never allow yourself to speak a rash word, and at the first cause of anxiety run for it. Such is the bravery which I counsel and which I practise. In the way of temerity, imitate the

birds; in the way of talking, imitate the fishes. England has one admirable point in her favour, — her legislation is very mild."

His admonition over, Ursus remained uneasy for some time; Gwynplaine, not at all. The intrepidity of youth arises from want of experience. However, it seemed that Gwynplaine had good reason for his easy mind, for the weeks flowed on peacefully, and no bad consequences seemed to have resulted from his observations about the queen.

Ursus, like a roebuck on the watch, kept a lookout in every direction. One day, a short time after his sermon to Gwynplaine, as he was looking out from the window in the wall which commanded the field, he became suddenly pale.

"Gwynplaine!"

"What?"

"Look!"

"Where?"

"In the field."

"Well?"

"Do you see that man?"

"The man in black?"

"Yes."

"Who has a kind of mace in his hand?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Well, Gwynplaine, that man is the wapentake."

"What is the wapentake?"

"He is the bailiff of the hundred."

"What is the bailiff of the hundred?"

"He is the *præpositus hundredi*."

"And what is the *præpositus hundredi*?"

"He is a terrible officer."

"What has he got in his hand?"

"The iron weapon."

"What is the iron weapon?"

"A thing made of iron."

"What does he do with that?"

"First of all, he swears upon it. It is for that reason that he is called the wapentake."

"And then?"

"Then he touches you with it."

"With what?"

"With the iron weapon."

"The wapentake touches you with the iron weapon?"

"Yes."

"What does that mean?"

"That means, 'Follow me.'"

"And must you follow him?"

"Yes."

"Whither?"

"How should I know?"

"But he tells you where he is going to take you, does he not?"

"No."

"How is that?"

"He says nothing, and you say nothing."

"But —"

"He touches you with the iron weapon. All is over then. You must go."

"Go where?"

"With him."

"But where?"

"Wherever he likes, Gwynplaine."

"And if you resist?"

"You are hanged."

Ursus looked out of the window again, and drawing a long breath, exclaimed: "Thank God! He has passed. He is not coming here."

Ursus was perhaps unreasonably alarmed about the indiscreet remark, and the consequences likely to result from Gwynplaine's words.

Master Nicless, who had heard them, had no interest in compromising the poor inmates of the Green Box. He was amassing, at the same time as the Laughing Man, a nice little fortune. "Chaos Vanquished" had succeeded in two ways. It not only made art triumph on the stage, but it made drunkenness increase in the tavern.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MOUSE EXAMINED BY THE CATS.

URSUS was soon afterwards startled by another alarming circumstance. This time he was the person concerned. He was summoned to Bishopsgate, before a commission composed of three important personages, — three doctors, called overseers. One was a Doctor of Theology, delegated by the Dean of Westminster; another, a Doctor of Medicine, delegated by the College of Surgeons; the third, a Doctor in History and Civil Law, delegated by Gresham College. These three experts *in omne re scibili* had the censorship of everything said in public throughout the bounds of the hundred and thirty parishes of London, the seventy-three of Middlesex, and, by extension, the five of Southwark.

Such theological jurisdictions still exist in England, and do good service. In December, 1868, by sentence of the Court of Arches, confirmed by the decision of the Privy Council, the Reverend Mackonochie was censured, besides being condemned to pay costs, for having placed lighted candles on a table. The liturgy allows no jokes.

One fine day Ursus received from the delegates an order to appear before them, which was, luckily, given into his own hands, and which he was therefore enabled to keep a secret. Without saying a word, he obeyed the citation, shuddering at the thought that he might be considered culpable to the extent of being suspected of

a certain amount of rashness. He who had so recommended silence to others had here a rough lesson. *Garrule sana teipsum.*

The three doctors sat at Bishopsgate, at the end of a room on the ground-floor, in three arm-chairs covered with black leather, with three busts,—those of Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus,—on the wall above their heads, a table before them, and at their feet a form for the accused. Ursus, introduced by a tipstaff, of placid but severe expression, entered, perceived the doctors, and immediately in his own mind gave to each of them the name of the judge of the infernal regions represented by the bust placed above his head. Minos, the president, the representative of theology, made him a sign to sit down on the form.

Ursus made a proper bow, — that is to say, bowed to the ground; and knowing that bears are charmed by honey and doctors by Latin, he said, keeping his body still bent respectfully: “*Tres faciunt capitulum!*” Then, with head still inclined (for modesty disarms), he sat down on the form.

Each of the three doctors had before him a bundle of papers, of which he was turning the leaves. Minos began:—

“You speak in public?”

“Yes,” replied Ursus.

“By what right?”

“I am a philosopher.”

“That gives no right.”

“I am also a mountebank,” said Ursus.

“That is a different thing.”

Ursus breathed again, but with humility.

Minos resumed: “As a mountebank, you may speak; as a philosopher, you must keep silence.”

“I will try,” said Ursus. Then he thought to him-

self: "I may speak, but I must be silent. How complicated!" He was much alarmed.

The same functionary continued: "You say things which do not sound right. You insult religion. You deny the most evident truths. You propagate revolting errors. For instance, you have said that the fact of virginity excludes the possibility of maternity."

Ursus lifted his eyes meekly: "I did not say that. I said that the fact of maternity excludes the possibility of virginity."

Minos was thoughtful, and mumbled, "True, that is the contrary."

It was really the same thing. But Ursus had parried the first blow.

Minos, meditating on the answer just given by Ursus, sank into the depths of his own imbecility, and kept silent.

The overseer of history, or, as Ursus called him, Rhadamanthus, covered the retreat of Minos by this interpolation: "Accused! your audacity and your errors are of two sorts. You have denied that the battle of Pharsalia was lost because Brutus and Cassius had met a negro."

"I said," murmured Ursus, "that there was something in the fact that Cæsar was the better captain."

The man of history passed, without transition, to mythology. "You have excused the infamous acts of Actæon."

"I think," said Ursus, insinuatingly, "that a man is not dishonoured by having seen a naked woman."

"Then you are wrong," said the judge, severely.

Rhadamanthus returned to history. "Apropos of the accidents which happened to the cavalry of Mithridates, you have denied the virtues of herbs and plants. You have denied that an herb like the securiduca could make the shoes of horses fall off."

"Pardon me," replied Ursus. "I said that the power existed only in the herb *sferra cavallo*. I never denied the virtue of any herb." And he added, in a low voice, "Nor of any woman."

By this extraneous addition to his answer Ursus proved to himself that, anxious as he was, he was not disheartened. Ursus was a compound of terror and presence of mind.

"To continue," resumed Rhadamanthus; "you have declared that it was folly in Scipio, when he wished to open the gates of Carthage, to use as a key the herb *athiopis*, because the herb *athiopis* has not the property of breaking locks."

"I merely said that he would have done better to have used the herb *lunaria*."

"That is a matter of opinion," murmured Rhadamanthus, touched in his turn.

And the man of history was silent.

The theologian, Minos, having recovered consciousness, questioned Ursus anew. He had had time to consult his notes.

"You have classed orpiment among the products of arsenic, and you have said that it is a poison. The Bible denies this."

"The Bible denies, but arsenic affirms it," sighed Ursus.

The man whom Ursus called Æacus, and who was the representative of medicine, had not yet spoken; but now looking down on Ursus, with proudly half-closed eyes, he said, "The answer is not without some show of reason."

Ursus thanked him with his most cringing smile.

Minos frowned frightfully. "I resume," he said. "You have said that it is false that the basilisk is the king of serpents, under the name of cockatrice."

"Very reverend sir," said Ursus, "so little did I desire to insult the basilisk that I have given out as certain that it has a man's head."

"Be it so," replied Minos, severely; "but you added that Poerius had seen one with the head of a falcon. Can you prove it?"

"Not easily," said Ursus.

Here he had lost a little ground. Minos, seizing the advantage, pushed it:—

"You have said that a converted Jew has not a nice smell."

"Yes. But I added that a Christian who becomes a Jew has a nasty one."

Minos again cast his eyes over the accusing documents. "You have affirmed and propagated things which are impossible. You have said that Æliian had seen an elephant write sentences."

"Nay, very reverend gentlemen! I simply said that Oppian had heard an hippopotamus discuss a philosophical problem."

"You have declared that it is not true that a dish made of beech-wood will become covered of itself with all the viands that one can desire."

"I said that if it has this virtue, it must be that you received it from the devil."

"That I received it!"

"No, most reverend sir. I, nobody, everybody!"

Aside, Ursus thought, "I don't know what I am saying." But his confusion, though extreme, was not visible outwardly, so bravely did he struggle against it.

"All this," Minos resumed, "implies a certain belief in the devil."

Ursus held his own. "Very reverend sir, I am not an unbeliever with regard to the devil. Belief in the devil follows from faith in God. The one proves the

other. He who does not believe a little in the devil does not believe much in God. He who believes in the sun must believe in the shadow. The devil is the night of God. What is night? The proof of day."

Ursus here extemporized a fathomless combination of philosophy and religion. Minos remained pensive, and relapsed into silence. Ursus breathed again.

A sharp onslaught now took place. Æacus, the medical delegate, who had disdainfully protected Ursus against the theologian, now suddenly turned from auxiliary into assailant. He placed his closed fist on his bundle of papers, which was large and heavy, and Ursus received this apostrophe full in the breast:—

"It is proved that crystal is sublimated ice, and that the diamond is sublimated crystal. It is averred that ice becomes crystal in a thousand years, and crystal diamond in a thousand ages. You have denied this."

"Nay," replied Ursus, with sadness. "I only said that in a thousand years ice had time to melt, and that a thousand ages were difficult to count."

The examination went on; questions and answers clashed like swords.

"You have denied that plants can talk."

"Not at all; but to do so they must grow under a gibbet."

"Do you admit that the mandragora cries?"

"No; but it sings."

"You have denied that the fourth finger of the left hand has any specific virtue."

"I only said that to sneeze to the left was a bad sign."

"You have spoken rashly and disrespectfully of the phoenix."

"Learned judge, I merely said that when he wrote that the brain of the phoenix was a delicate morsel, but

that it produced headache, Plutarch was a little out of his reckoning, inasmuch as the phoenix never existed."

"A detestable speech. The cinnamalker, which makes its nest with sticks of cinnamon, the rhintacus that Parysatis used in the manufacture of her poisons, the manucodiatas which is the bird of paradise, and the semenda, which has a beak with three holes, have been mistaken for the phoenix; but the phoenix has existed."

"I do not deny it."

"You are a stupid ass."

"I desire to be thought no better."

"You have confessed that the elder-tree cures the quinsy, but you added that it was not because it has a fairy excrescence at its root."

"I said it was because Judas hung himself on an elder-tree."

"A plausible opinion," growled the theologian, glad to strike his little blow at Æacus.

Arrogance repulsed soon turns to anger. Æacus was enraged.

"Strolling mountebank! your mind wanders as much as your feet. Your doctrines are not only startling but extremely suspicious in their nature. You are the next thing to a sorcerer. You have dealings with unknown animals. You speak to the populace of things that exist but for you alone, and the nature of which is unknown, such as the hæmorrhoids."

"The hæmorrhoids is a viper which was seen by Tremellius."

This repartee produced a certain disorder in the irritated science of Doctor Æacus.

Ursus added: "The existence of the hæmorrhoids is quite as true as that of the odoriferous hyæna, and of the civet described by Castellus."

Æacus got out of the difficulty by charging home:

"Here are your own words, and very diabolical words they are. Listen." With his eye on his notes, Æacus read: "Two plants, the thalagssigle and the aglaphotis, are luminous in the evening, flowers by day, stars by night." And looking steadily at Ursus: "What have you to say to that?"

Ursus answered: "Every plant is a lamp. Its perfume is its light."

Æacus turned over other pages. "You have denied that the vesicles of the otter are equivalent to castoreum."

"I merely said that perhaps it may be necessary to receive the teaching of Aëtius on this point with some reserve."

Æacus became furious. "You practise medicine?"

"I practise medicine," sighed Ursus, timidly.

"On living things?"

"Rather than on dead ones," said Ursus.

Ursus defended himself stoutly, but dully, — an admirable mixture, in which meekness predominated. He spoke with such gentleness that Doctor Æacus felt that he must insult him.

"What are you murmuring there?" said he, rudely.

Ursus was amazed, and restricted himself to saying, "Murmurings are for the young, and moans for the aged. Alas, I moan!"

Æacus replied: "Be assured of this: if you attend a sick person, and he dies, you will be punished by death."

Ursus hazarded a question. "And if he gets well?"

"In that case," said the doctor, lowering his voice, "you will also be punished by death."

"There is very little difference," said Ursus.

The doctor replied: "If death ensues, we punish gross ignorance; if recovery, we punish presumption. The gibbet in either case."

"I was ignorant of the fact," murmured Ursus. "I thank you for informing me. One does not know all the beauties of the law."

"Take care of yourself."

"Religiously," said Ursus.

"We know what you are about."

"As for me," thought Ursus, "that is more than I always know myself."

"We could send you to prison."

"I see that perfectly, gentlemen."

"You cannot deny your infractions nor your encroachments."

"My philosophy asks pardon."

"Great audacity has been attributed to you."

"That is quite a mistake."

"It is said that you have cured the sick."

"I am the victim of calumny."

The three pairs of eyebrows which were so horribly fixed on Ursus contracted. The three wise faces drew near to one another, and whispered. Ursus had a vision of a shadowy fool's cap sketched above those three august heads. The low whispering of the trio was of some minutes' duration, during which time Ursus felt all the chill and all the scorch of agony. At length Minos, who was president, turned to him and said angrily:

"Go away!"

Ursus felt something like Jonas when he was leaving the belly of the whale.

Minos continued: "You are discharged."

Ursus said to himself: "They won't catch me at this again. Good-bye, medicine!" And he added, in his innermost heart: "Henceforth I will carefully allow them to die."

Bent double, he bowed to everything,—to the doctors, the busts, the tables, the walls,—and retiring backwards

through the door, disappeared almost like a shadow melting into air. He left the hall slowly, like an innocent man, and rushed up the street rapidly like a guilty one. Officers of justice are so singular and obscure in their ways that even when one is acquitted, one flies from them.

As he fled, Ursus mumbled, "I am well out of it. I am the savant untamed; they the savants civilized. Doctors cavil at the learned. False science is the excrement of the true, and is employed to the destruction of philosophers. Philosophers, when they produce sophists, produce their own scourge. Of the dung of the thrush is born the mistletoe, of which is made the birdlime with which the thrush is captured. *Turdus sibi malum cacat.*"

We do not represent Ursus as a refined man. He had the effrontery to use the words which expressed his thoughts. He had no better taste than Voltaire.

When Ursus returned to the Green Box he told Master Nicless that he had been delayed by following a pretty woman, and let not a word escape him concerning his adventure, — except in the evening, when he said in a low voice to Homo: "See here, I have vanquished the three heads of Cerberus."

CHAPTER VII.

WHY SHOULD A GOLD PIECE LOWER ITSELF BY MIXING
WITH A HEAP OF PENNIES ?

A GREAT event happened. The Tadcaster Inn had become more and more a maelstrom of joy and laughter. Never was there such resonant gaiety. The landlord and his boy were not able to draw all the ale, stout, and porter. In the evening in the lower room, with its windows all aglow, there was not a vacant table. They sang, they shouted; the huge fireplace, vaulted like an oven, with its iron bars piled with logs, shone out brightly. It was like a house of fire and noise.

In the yard — that is to say, in the theatre — the crowd was greater still. Crowds as great as Southwark could supply so thronged the performances of “Chaos Vanquished” that directly the curtain was raised (that is to say, the platform of the Green Box was lowered) every place was filled. The windows were alive with spectators, the balcony was crammed. Not a single stone was to be seen in the courtyard. It seemed to be paved with faces. Only the compartment for the nobility remained empty. There was thus a vacant space in the centre of the balcony; crowds everywhere except in that one spot. But one evening that also was occupied.

It was on a Saturday, a day on which the English make all haste to amuse themselves before the *ennui* of

Sunday. The hall was full. We say "hall;" Shakspeare for a long time had to use the yard of an inn for a theatre, and he called it "hall." Just as the curtain rose on the prologue of "Chaos Vanquished," with Ursus, Homo, and Gwynplaine on the stage, Ursus, from habit, cast a look at the audience, and experienced quite a shock.

The compartment for the nobility was occupied. A lady was sitting in the middle of the box, on the Utrecht velvet arm-chair. She was alone, and yet she filled the box. Some beings seem to emit light. This lady, like Dea, had a light within herself, but a light of an entirely different character. Dea was pale, this lady was rosy; Dea was the twilight, this lady was Aurora; Dea was beautiful, this lady was superb. Dea was innocence, candour, fairness, alabaster; this woman was of the purple, and one felt that she did not fear the blush. Her irradiation overflowed the box; she sat in the midst of it, immovable, with all the pervading majesty of an idol. Amid the sordid crowd she shone out grandly, as with the radiance of a carbuncle. She inundated it with so much light that she drowned it in shadow, and all the mean faces in it underwent eclipse. Her splendour blotted out everything else. Every eye was turned towards her. Tom-Jim-Jack was in the crowd; he was lost like the rest in the nimbus of this dazzling creature.

The lady at first so absorbed the attention of the public who had crowded to the performance that she rather diminished the opening effects of "Chaos Vanquished." Despite the air of dreamland about her, to those who were near she was a woman; perchance, too much a woman. She was tall and amply formed, and showed as much as possible of her magnificent person. She wore heavy earrings of pearls, with which were mixed those

whimsical jewels called "keys of England." Her upper dress was of Indian muslin, embroidered all over with gold, — a great luxury, because those muslin dresses then cost six hundred crowns. A large diamond brooch fastened her corsage, the which she wore so as to display her shoulders and bosom, in the immodest fashion of the time; her chemisette was made of that lawn of which Anne of Austria had sheets so fine that they could be passed through a finger-ring. She wore what looked like a cuirass of rubies (some uncut, but polished), and precious stones were sewn all over the body of her dress. Then, her eyebrows were blackened with India ink; and her arms, elbows, shoulders, chin, and nostrils, with the top of her eyelids, the lobes of her ears, the palms of her hands, the tips of her fingers, were tinted with a glowing and provoking touch of colour. Above all, she wore an expression of implacable determination to be beautiful that amounted almost to ferocity. She was like a panther, with the power of turning cat at will, and caressing. One of her eyes was blue, the other black. Gwynplaine, as well as Ursus, contemplated her with wonder. The Green Box somewhat resembled a phantasmagoria in its representations. "Chaos Vanquished" was rather a dream than a piece; it generally produced on the audience the effect of a vision. Now, this effect was reflected on the actors. The house took the performers by surprise, and they were thunderstruck in their turn. It was a rebound of fascination. The woman watched them, and they watched her. At the distance at which they were placed, and in that luminous mist which is the half-light of a theatre, details were lost, and it was like an hallucination.

Of course it was a woman, but was it not a chimera as well? The penetration of such dazzling light into their obscurity stupefied them. It was like the appear-

ance of an unknown planet. It came from the world of the great and prosperous. Irradiation amplified her figure. The lady was covered with nocturnal glitterings, like the milky way. Her precious stones were stars. The diamond brooch was perhaps a pleiad. The splendid beauty of her bosom seemed supernatural. They felt, as they looked upon the star-like creature, the momentary but thrilling approach of the regions of felicity. It was out of the heights of a paradise that she leaned towards their insignificant Green Box, and revealed to the gaze of its wretched audience an expression of inexorable serenity. As she satisfied her unbounded curiosity, she fed at the same time the curiosity of the public. It was the Zenith permitting the Abyss to look at it. Ursus, Gwynplaine, Vinos, Fibi, the crowd, every one had succumbed to her dazzling beauty, except Dea, ignorant in her darkness. An apparition was indeed before them; but none of the ideas usually evoked by the word were realized in the lady's appearance. There was nothing diaphanous, nothing undecided, nothing floating, no mist about her. She was a goddess; rose-coloured and fresh, and full of health. Yet, under the optical condition in which Ursus and Gwynplaine were placed, she looked like a vision. There are fleshy phantoms, called vampires. Such a queen as she, though a spirit to the crowd, requires twelve hundred thousand a year, to keep her in health.

Behind the lady, in the shadow, stood her page, *el mozo*, a child-like youth, fair and pretty, with a serious face. A very young and very grave servant was the fashion of that period. This page was dressed from top to toe in scarlet velvet, and had on his skull-cap, which was embroidered with gold, a bunch of curled feathers. This was the sign of a high class of service, and indi-

cated attendance on a very great lady. The lackey is a part of his lord, and one could hardly fail to notice this train-bearing page in the shadow of his mistress. Memory often takes notes unconsciously; and, without Gwynplaine's suspecting it, the round cheeks, the serious mien, the embroidered and plumed cap of the lady's page left some trace upon his mind. The page, however, did nothing to call attention to himself. To do so is to be wanting in respect. He held himself aloof and passive at the back of the box, retiring as far as the closed door permitted. Notwithstanding the presence of her train-bearer, the lady was not the less alone in the compartment, since a valet counts for nothing.

Powerful as was the diversion created by this great personage, the *dénouement* of "Chaos Vanquished" proved more powerful still. The impression which it made was, as usual, irresistible. Perhaps there was even an increase of magnetic attraction in the hall by reason of the radiant spectator, for not infrequently the spectator forms a part of the spectacle. The contagion of Gwynplaine's laugh was more triumphant than ever. The whole audience relapsed into an indescribable fit of hilarity, through which could be distinguished the sonorous and magisterial ha! ha! of Tom-Jim-Jack. The unknown lady alone gazed at the performance with the immobility of a statue; even with her eyes, which were like those of a phantom, she smiled not. A spectre, but sun-born.

The performance over, the platform drawn up, and the family reassembled in the Green Box, Ursus opened and emptied on the supper-table the bag of receipts. From a heap of pennies there slid suddenly forth a Spanish gold onza.

"Hers!" cried Ursus.

The onza amid the verdigris-covered pennies was a type of the lady amid the crowd.

"She paid an onza for her seat," cried Ursus, with enthusiasm.

Just then the hotel-keeper entered the Green Box, and passing his arm out of the window at the back of it, opened the loop-hole in the wall of which we have already spoken, which gave a view over the field, and which was level with the window, then he made a silent sign to Ursus to look out. A carriage, swarming with plumed footmen carrying torches and magnificently appointed, was driving off at a fast trot.

Ursus took the piece of gold between his forefinger and thumb respectfully, and showing it to Master Nicless, said, "She is a goddess." Then, his eyes falling on the carriage which was about to turn the corner of the field, and on the imperial where the footmen's torches lighted up a golden coronet, with eight strawberry leaves, he exclaimed, "She is more,—she is a duchess!"

The carriage disappeared. The rumbling of its wheels died away in the distance. Ursus remained some moments lost in ecstasy, holding the gold piece between his finger and thumb, elevating it as the priest elevates the host. Then he placed it on the table, and, as he contemplated it, began to talk of "Madam."

"She was a duchess," the inn-keeper assured him. Yes. They knew her title. But her name? Of that they were ignorant. Master Nicless had been close to the carriage, and had seen the coat-of-arms, and the footmen covered with lace. The coachman had on a wig which might have belonged to a Lord Chancellor. The carriage was of that rare design called in Spain *coche-tumbon*, a splendid build, with a rounding top, which makes a magnificent support for a coronet. The page

was a man in miniature, so small that he could sit on the step of the carriage outside the door. The duty of those pretty creatures was to bear the trains of their mistresses. They also delivered their messages. And did you notice the plumed cap of the page? How grand it was! You pay a fine if you wear those plumes without the right to do so. Master Nicless had seen the lady, too, quite close. A kind of queen. Such wealth gives beauty. The skin is whiter, the eye more proud, the gait more noble, and the grace more insolent. Nothing can equal the elegant impertinence of hands that never toil. Master Nicless went into ecstasies over the magnificence of the white skin with the blue veins, the neck, shoulders, and arms, the touch of paint everywhere, the pearl earrings, the head-dress, powdered with gold; the profusion of precious stones, the rubies and diamonds.

"Less brilliant than her eyes," murmured Ursus.

Gwynplaine said nothing.

Dea listened.

"And do you know," said the tavern-keeper, "the most wonderful thing of all?"

"What?" said Ursus.

"I saw her get into her carriage."

"What then?"

"She did not get in alone."

"Nonsense!"

"Some one got in with her."

"Who?"

"Guess."

"The king," said Ursus.

"In the first place," said Master Nicless, "there is no king at present. We are not living under a king. Guess who got into the carriage with the duchess."

"Jupiter," said Ursus.

“Tom-Jim-Jack!” the hotel-keeper replied.

Gwynplaine, who had not said a word, broke silence,
“Tom-Jim-Jack!” he cried.

There was a pause of astonishment, during which the low voice of Dea was heard to say, “Cannot this woman be prevented from coming?”

CHAPTER VIII.

SYMPTOMS OF POISONING.

THE duchess did not return. She did not reappear in the theatre, but she reappeared in the recesses of Gwynplaine's memory.

Gwynplaine was, to a certain degree, troubled. It seemed to him that for the first time in his life he had seen a woman. He made that first stumble, a strange dream. We should beware of the nature of the reveries in which we indulge. Reverie is imbued with all the mystery and subtlety of an odour. It is to thought what perfume is to the tuberose. It is at times the exudation of a venomous idea, which penetrates like a vapour. You may poison yourself with reveries, as with flowers, — an intoxicating suicide, exquisite and malignant. The suicide of the soul is evil thought. In it lurks a deadly poison. Reverie entices, cajoles, lures, entwines, and finally makes you its accomplice. It makes you in part accountable for the trickeries which it plays on conscience. It charms; then it corrupts you. We may say of reverie as of play, — one begins by being a dupe, and ends by being a cheat.

Gwynplaine dreamed. He had never before seen Woman. He had seen the shadow in the women of the populace, and he had seen the soul in Dea. He had just seen the reality. A warm and living skin, under which one felt the circulation of passionate blood; a contour with the precision of marble and the undulation

of the wave; a haughty and impassive mien, combining coldness with provocation, and evidently content in its own glory; hair the colour of the reflection from a furnace; a splendour of adornment producing in herself and in others a thrill of voluptuousness; the half-revealed nudity betraying a disdainful desire to be coveted at a distance by the crowd; an inextinguishable coquetry; the charm of impenetrability; a temptation heightened by the zest which always attaches to that which is forbidden; a promise to the senses and a menace to the soul, and a two-fold fascination,—one desire; the other, fear: he had just seen all these things. He had just seen Woman. The mystery of sex had just been revealed to him.

And where? On inaccessible heights. At an infinite distance. O mocking destiny! The soul, that celestial essence, he possessed; he had it in his grasp, — it was Dea. Sex, that thing of the earth earthy, he perceived in the heights of heaven,—in that woman. A duchess! “More than a goddess,” Ursus had said. What a precipice. Even dreams recoiled before such a wild flight as this.

Was Gwynplaine going to commit the folly of dreaming about the unknown beauty? He debated with himself. He recalled all that Ursus had said of these almost royal personages. The philosopher’s disquisitions, which had hitherto seemed so useless, now became subjects for meditation. A very thin layer of forgetfulness often coats our memory, through which at times we catch a glimpse of all beneath it. His fancy ran on that august world, the peerage, to which the lady belonged, and which was placed so immeasurably above the inferior world, the common people, of which he was one. And was he one of the common people even? Was not he, the mountebank, below the lowest of the

low? For the first time since he had arrived at the age of reflection, he felt his heart oppressed by a consciousness of his baseness,—or rather of that which we nowadays call abasement. The descriptions and enumerations of Ursus, his lyrical inventories, his rhapsodies over castles, parks, fountains, and colonnades, his catalogues of art treasures and estates, all recurred vividly to Gwynplaine's mind. He was possessed with the image of this zenith. That a man should be a lord!—it seemed chimerical. It was so, however. Incredible thing! There were lords! But were they of flesh and blood, like himself? It seemed doubtful. He felt that he was in the depths of shadow, encompassed by a wall, but he could just discern in the distance above his head, through the mouth of the pit, that dazzling confusion of azure, of figures and of rays, which constitutes Olympus. In the midst of this glory the duchess shone resplendent.

Gwynplaine felt for this woman a strange, inexpressible longing, combined with a conviction of the impossibility of attainment. This poignant contradiction recurred to his mind again and again, notwithstanding every effort. He saw near to him, even within his reach, in close and tangible reality, the soul; and in the unattainable,—in the depths of the ideal world,—the flesh. None of these thoughts attained definite shape. They were like a vapour within him, changing every instant in form, and floating away. Luckily for him, he did not form even in his dreams any hope of reaching the heights where the duchess dwelt. The vibration of such ladders of fancy, if ever we set our foot upon them, may unsettle our brains forever; intending to scale Olympus, we reach Bedlam. Any distinct feeling of actual desire would have terrified Gwynplaine however. He entertained none of that nature. Besides, was he likely ever to see the lady again? Most proba-

bly not. To fall in love with a passing light on the horizon, madness cannot reach to that pitch. To cast adoring glances at a star even, is not incomprehensible. It may be seen again, it reappears, it is fixed in the sky. But can any one be enamoured of a flash of lightning? Dreams came and went within him. The beautiful and majestic occupant of the box had imparted a strange radiance to his wandering thoughts. He thought of her, resolved to think of other things, then began to think of her again.

Gwynplaine was unable to sleep for several nights. Insomnia is as full of dreams as sleep. It is almost impossible to describe exactly the workings of the brain. The trouble with words is that they are more marked in form than in meaning. All ideas have indistinct boundary lines, words have not. Certain phases of the soul cannot be described. Expression has its limits, thought has not. The depths of our secret souls are so vast that Gwynplaine's dreams scarcely touched Dea. Dea reigned supreme in his inmost soul; nothing could approach her. Still (for such contradictions make up the soul of man), there was a conflict going on within him. Was he conscious of it? Scarcely. In his heart of hearts he was a prey to conflicting hopes and desires. We all have our moments of weakness. The nature of this conflict would have been clear to Ursus; but to Gwynplaine it was not. Two instincts — one the ideal, the other sexual — were struggling within him. Such contests occur between the angels of light and darkness on the edge of the abyss.

At length the angel of darkness was overthrown. One day Gwynplaine ceased to think of the unknown woman. A struggle between right and wrong — a duel between his earthly and his heavenly nature — had taken place within his soul, and at such a depth that he had un-

derstood it but dimly. One thing was certain,—he had never for one moment ceased to adore Dea. He had been attacked by a violent disorder, his blood had been fevered; but it was over. Dea was his only thought now. Gwynplaine would have been much astonished had any one told him that Dea had been in danger, even for a moment; and in a week or two the phantom which had threatened the souls of both had faded away.

Besides, we have just said that “the duchess” did not return. Ursus thought that very natural. “The lady with the gold piece” is a phenomenon. She enters, pays, and vanishes. It would be too much joy were she to return.

As for Dea, she made no allusion to the woman who had appeared only to disappear. She was sufficiently enlightened, perhaps, by the sighs of Ursus, and now and then by some significant exclamation, such as, “One does not get ounces of gold every day.” She never spoke of “that woman.” This showed deep instinct. The soul takes many precautions in secrets which it does not even admit to be secrets. To be silent about any one seems to keep them afar off. One seems to fear that questions may call them back. We put silence between us, as if we were shutting a door.

So the incident sank into oblivion. Was it anything, after all? Had it ever occurred? Could it be said that a shadow had floated between Gwynplaine and Dea? Dea did not know it, nor did Gwynplaine. No; nothing had occurred. The duchess herself was blurred in the distant perspective like an illusion. It had been but a momentary dream, out of which Gwynplaine had speedily wakened. When it fades away, a reverie, like mist, leaves no trace behind; and when the cloud has passed, love shines out as brightly in the heart as the sun in the sky.

CHAPTER IX.

ABYSSUS ABYSSUM VOCAT.

ANOTHER face had disappeared,—Tom-Jim-Jack's. He had suddenly ceased to frequent the Tadcaster Inn.

Persons so situated as to be able to observe phases of fashionable life in London, might have seen about this time that the "Weekly Gazette" announced the departure of Lord David Dirry-Moir, by order of her Majesty, to take command of his frigate in the white squadron then cruising off the coast of Holland.

Ursus was much troubled by Tom-Jim-Jack's absence. He had not seen the sailor since the day on which he had driven off in the same carriage with the lady of the gold piece. It was, indeed, an enigma who this Tom-Jim-Jack who carried off duchesses under his arm could be. What an interesting investigation! What questions to propound! What things to be said! Therefore Ursus said not a word.

Ursus, who had had experience, knew the smart caused by rash curiosity. Curiosity ought always to be proportioned to the rank of the curious. By listening, we risk our ear; by watching, we risk our eye. Prudent people neither hear nor see. Tom-Jim-Jack had got into a princely carriage. The tavern-keeper had seen him. It appeared so extraordinary that the sailor should sit by the lady that it made Ursus circumspect. The caprices of those in high life should be sacred to the

lower orders. The reptiles called the poor had best keep quiet in their holes when they see anything out of the way. Quiescence is a power. Shut your eyes, if you have not the luck to be blind; stop up your ears, if you have not the good fortune to be deaf; hold your tongue, if you have not the good fortune to be mute. The great do what they like, the humble what they can. Let the mysterious pass unnoticed. Do not annoy the gods and goddesses. Do not interrogate appearances. Have a profound respect for idols. Do not gossip about the lessenings or increasings which take place in the upper regions, or about motives of which we are ignorant. Such things are mostly optical delusions to us inferior creatures. Metamorphoses are the business of the gods; the transformations and disorders of great persons who float above us are difficult to comprehend, and perilous to study. Too much attention irritates the Olympians engaged in their gyrations of amusement or fancy, and a thunderbolt may teach you that the bull you are too curiously examining is Jupiter. Do not lift the folds of the stone-coloured mantles of those terrible powers. Indifference is the truest wisdom. Do not stir, and you will be safe. Feign death, and they will not kill you. Therein lies the wisdom of the insect. Ursus practised it.

The tavern-keeper, who was puzzled as well, questioned Ursus one day. "Do you notice that Tom-Jim-Jack never comes here now?"

"Indeed!" said Ursus. "I had not remarked it."

Master Nicless made an observation in an undertone, no doubt touching on the intimacy between the ducal carriage and Tom-Jim-Jack, — a remark which, as it might have been irreverent and dangerous, Ursus took good care not to hear.

Still, Ursus was too much of an artist not to regret

Tom-Jim-Jack. He felt some disappointment. He told his feelings to Homo, of whose discretion alone he felt certain. He whispered into the ear of the wolf: "Since Tom-Jim-Jack has ceased to come, I feel a blank as a man, and a chill as a poet." This outpouring of his heart to a friend relieved Ursus. His lips were sealed before Gwynplaine, who, however, made no allusion to Tom-Jim-Jack. The fact was that Tom-Jim-Jack's presence or absence mattered little to Gwynplaine, absorbed as he was in Dea.

Forgetfulness fell more and more on Gwynplaine. As for Dea, she had not even suspected the existence of a vague trouble. At the same time, no more cabals or complaints against the Laughing Man were spoken of. Hate seemed to have let go its hold. All was tranquil in and around the Green Box. No more opposition from strollers, merry-andrews, nor priests; no more grumbling outside. Their success was unclouded. Destiny allows of such sudden serenity. The brilliant happiness of Gwynplaine and Dea was for the present absolutely cloudless. Little by little it had risen to a degree which admitted of no increase. There is one word which expresses the situation, — apogee. Happiness, like the sea, has its high tide. The worst thing for the perfectly happy is that it recedes.

There are two ways of being inaccessible, — being too high and being too low. At least as much, perhaps, as the first, is the second to be desired. More surely than the eagle escapes the arrow, the animalcule escapes being crushed. This security of insignificance, if it had ever existed on earth, was enjoyed by Gwynplaine and Dea, and never before had it been so complete. They lived on, daily more and more ecstatically wrapt in each other. The heart saturates itself with love as with a divine salt that preserves it, and from this arises the

incorruptible constancy of those who have loved each other from the dawn of their lives, and the affection which keeps its freshness in old age. There is such a thing as the embalmment of the heart. It is of Daphnis and Chloe that Philemon and Baucis are made. The old age, of which we speak, evening resembling morning, was evidently reserved for Gwynplaine and Dea. In the mean time they were young.

Ursus watched this love affair as a doctor watches a case. He had what was termed in those days a hippocratic expression of countenance. He fixed his sagacious eyes on Dea, so fragile and pale, and growled out, "It is lucky that she is happy." At other times he said, "It is fortunate for her health's sake." He shook his head, and at times read attentively the chapters treating of heart-disease in Avicenna, translated by Vopiscus Fortunatus, Louvain, 1650, an old worm-eaten book of his.

Dea, when fatigued, suffered much from perspirations and drowsiness, and took a daily *siesta*, as we have already said. One day, while she was lying asleep on the bearskin, and Gwynplaine was out, Ursus bent down softly and applied his ear to Dea's heart. He seemed to listen for a few minutes, and then stood up, murmuring, "She must not have any shock. It would be sure to go to the weak spot."

The crowd continued to flock to the performances of "Chaos Vanquished." The success of the Laughing Man seemed inexhaustible. Every one rushed to see him, — not from Southwark only, but even from other parts of London. The general public began to mingle with the usual audience, which no longer consisted exclusively of sailors and drivers. In the opinion of Master Nicless, who was familiar with crowds, there were many gentlemen and baronets disguised as common people in this one. Disguise is one of the chief amusements of the

great, and was greatly in fashion at that period. This admixture of an aristocratic element with the mob was a good sign, and showed that the popularity of the show was extending to London. The fame of Gwynplaine must have penetrated into the great world. Such was the fact. Nothing was talked of but the Laughing Man. He was the subject of comment even at the Mohawk Club, frequented by noblemen.

The inmates of the Green Box had no idea of all this. They were content to be happy. It was bliss to Dea to touch, as she did every evening, the crisp, tawny locks of Gwynplaine. In love there is nothing like habit. The whole of life is concentrated in it. The reappearance of the stars is the custom of the universe. Creation is nothing but a mistress, and the sun a lover. Light is a dazzling caryatide supporting the world. Every day, for one sublime moment, the earth shrouded by night rests on the rising sun. Dea, blind, felt a similar return of warmth and hope within her when she placed her hand on Gwynplaine's head. To adore each other in seclusion, to love in the plenitude of silence,—who would not be reconciled to such an eternity?

One evening Gwynplaine, feeling within him that overflow of felicity, which like the intoxication of perfumes causes a sort of delicious faintness, was strolling, as he usually did after the performance, in the meadow a few hundred yards from the Green Box. Sometimes in those high tides of feeling in our souls we feel that we would fain pour out the sensations of the overflowing heart. The night was dark but clear. The stars were shining. The whole fair-ground was deserted. Sleep and forgetfulness reigned in the vans which were scattered over the Tarrinzeau Field. One light alone was unextinguished. It was a lamp at the Tadcaster Inn, the door of which was left ajar to admit Gwynplaine on his return.

Midnight had just struck in the five parishes of Southwark, with the different intervals and tones of their various bells. Gwynplaine was dreaming of Dea. Of whom else should he dream? But that evening, feeling singularly troubled, and full of a charm which was at the same time a pang, he was thinking of Dea as a man thinks of a woman. He reproached himself for this. It seemed to be a lack of respect to her. Sweet and imperious impatience! He was crossing the invisible barrier, on one side of which stands the virgin, on the other, the wife. He questioned himself anxiously. A blush, as it were, overspread his mind. The Gwynplaine of long ago had been transformed by degrees and unconsciously. The modest youth was becoming strangely agitated. We have an ear of light, into which the spirit speaks; and an ear of darkness, into which the instinct speaks. Into the latter strange voices were now whispering. However pure-minded the youth may be who dreams of love, a certain grossness of the flesh eventually comes between him and his dream. Intentions lose their transparency. The secret desires implanted by nature will make themselves heard. Gwynplaine felt an indescribable yearning of the flesh, and Dea was scarcely flesh. In this fever, which he knew to be unhealthy, he transfigured Dea into a more material aspect, and tried to exaggerate her seraphic form into feminine loveliness. It is thou, O woman, that we require.

Love will not permit too much of paradise. It requires the fevered skin, the troubled life, the unbound hair, the electrical and irreparable kiss, the clasp of desire. The sidereal is embarrassing, the ethereal is cumbersome. Too much of the heavenly in love is like too much fuel on a fire,—the flame suffers from it. Gwynplaine fell into an exquisite reverie,—Dea to be

clasped in his arms! Dea clasped in them! He heard nature in his heart crying out for her. Like a Pygmalion modelling a Galatea out of the azure, in the depth of his soul he retouched the chaste outlines of Dea's form,—outlines with too much of heaven, too little of Eden about them; for Eden is Eve, and Eve was a female, a carnal mother, a terrestrial nurse, the sacred womb of future generations, the breast of unfailing milk, the rocker of the cradle of the new-born world; and wings are incompatible with the bosom of woman. Virginity is but the hope of maternity.

Still, in Gwynplaine's dreams heretofore, Dea had been enthroned above flesh. Now, however, he made wild efforts in thought to draw her downwards by that thread, sex, which binds every girl to earth. Not one of these birds is free. Dea was not exempt from this law, surely; and Gwynplaine, though he scarcely acknowledged it, felt a vague desire that she should submit to it. This desire possessed him in spite of himself, and with an ever-recurring persistency. He pictured Dea as woman. He came to the point of regarding her under a hitherto unheard-of form,—as a creature no longer of ecstasy alone, but of voluptuousness as well. He was ashamed of this visionary desecration. It was like an attempt at profanation. He resisted its assault. He turned from it, but it returned again and again. He felt as if he were committing a criminal assault. To him, Dea was encompassed as by a cloud.

It was in April, when even the spine has its dreams. He rambled on with an uncertain step in the solitude. To have no one by is an incentive to wander. Whither flew his thoughts? He would not have dared to own it to himself. To heaven? No, and yet you were looking down on him, O ye stars!

Why talk of a man in love? Rather say a man

possessed. To be possessed by the devil is the exception; to be possessed by a woman, the rule. Every man has to bear this alienation of himself. What a sorceress a pretty woman is! The true name of love is captivity. Man is made prisoner by the soul of a woman, and by her flesh as well, — sometimes even more by the flesh than by the soul. The soul is the true-love; the flesh, the mistress. We slander the devil. It was not he who tempted Eve. It was Eve who tempted him. The woman began it; Lucifer was passing by quietly. He perceived the woman, and became Satan. The flesh is the covering of the soul. It entices, strange to say, by its very modesty. Nothing could be more distracting. It is full of shame, the hussy!

It was passion rather than love which was then agitating Gwynplaine, and holding him in its power. What dark things lurk beneath the fairness of Venus! Something within him was calling aloud for Dea, — Dea the maiden, Dea the other half of a man, Dea flesh and flame! This cry was almost driving away the angel. Mysterious crisis through which all love must pass, and in which the Ideal is imperilled. Moment of heavenly corruption! Gwynplaine's love of Dea was becoming nuptial. Virgin love is but a transition. The moment was come. Gwynplaine coveted the woman. He coveted a woman! Precipice of which one sees but the first gentle slope. Luckily, there was no woman for Gwynplaine but Dea. The only one he desired. The only one who could desire him.

Gwynplaine felt that vague and mighty tremour which is the vital claim of infinity. Besides, there was the aggravation of the spring. He was breathing the nameless odours of the starry darkness. He walked on with a feeling of wild delight. The wandering perfumes of the rising sap, the soft irradiations which float

in shadow, the distant opening of nocturnal flowers, the complicity of little hidden nests, the murmurs of waters and of leaves, soft sighs rising from all things, the freshness, the warmth, and the mysterious awakening of April and May, is the vast diffusion of sex murmuring in whispers their proposals of voluptuousness, till the soul reels beneath the temptation to which it is subjected. Any one seeing Gwynplaine walk, would have said, "Look at that drunken man." He almost staggered under the weight of his own emotions, of the springtime influence, and of the night.

The solitude in the bowling-green was so peaceful that at times Gwynplaine spoke aloud. The consciousness that there is no listener induces speech. He walked with slow steps, his head bent down, his hands behind him, the left hand in the right, the fingers open. Suddenly he felt something slipped between his fingers. He turned round quickly. In his hand was a paper, and in front of him a man. It was this man who, coming up behind him with the stealthy tread of a cat, had placed the paper in his fingers. The paper was a letter. This man, whom he saw quite clearly in the starlight, was small, chubby-cheeked, young, sedate, and dressed in a scarlet livery, exposed from top to toe through the opening of a long grey cloak, then called a capenoehe,—a Spanish word contracted; in French it was *cape-de-nuit*. His head was covered by a crimson cap, like the skull-cap of a cardinal, on which servitude was indicated by a strip of lace. On this cap was a plume of tisserin feathers. He stood motionless before Gwynplaine, like a dark outline in a dream.

Gwynplaine recognized the duchess's page. Before he could utter an exclamation of surprise, he heard the thin voice of the page, at once child-like and feminine in its tone, saying to him:—

"At this hour to-morrow, be at the corner of London Bridge. I will be there to conduct you —"

"Whither?" demanded Gwynplaine.

"Where you are expected."

Gwynplaine glanced down at the letter, which he was holding mechanically in his hand. When he looked up, the page was no longer near him. He perceived a shadowy form rapidly disappearing in the distance. It was the little valet. He turned the corner of the street, and solitude reigned again. When Gwynplaine saw the page vanish, he again looked at the letter. There are moments in our lives when what happens seems but the figment of a dream. Surprise keeps us for a moment oblivious to the real facts.

Gwynplaine raised the letter, as if to read it, but soon perceived that he could not do so for two reasons, — first, because he had not broken the seal; and, secondly, because it was too dark. It was some minutes before he remembered that there was a lamp at the inn. He took a few steps sideways, as if he knew not whither he was going. A somnambulist to whom a phantom had just given a letter might walk as he did. At last he made up his mind. He ran, rather than walked, towards the inn, paused in the light which streamed through the half-open door, and again examined the closed letter by it. There was no design on the seal, and on the envelope was written, "*To Gwynplaine.*" He broke the seal, tore open the envelope, unfolded the letter, put it directly in the light, and read as follows:

You are hideous; I am beautiful. You are a player; I am a duchess. I am of the highest; you, of the lowest; nevertheless I love you! Come!

BOOK IV.

THE CELL OF TORTURE.

CHAPTER I.

THE TEMPTATION OF SAINT GWYNPLAINE.

ONE jet of flame is scarcely visible in the darkness ; another sets fire to a volcano. Some sparks are gigantic.

Gwynplaine read the letter, then he read it over again. Yes, the words were there, "I love you." Grim terrors chased each other through his mind. The first was, that he believed himself to be mad. He was mad ; that was certain. He had just seen what had no existence. The twilight spectres were making game of him, poor wretch ! The youth in scarlet was a will-o'-the-wisp. Sometimes at night, nothings condensed into flame come and laugh at us. Having had his laugh out, the visionary being had disappeared, and left Gwynplaine behind him, mad. Such are the freaks of darkness.

The second terror was, to find out that he was really in his right senses. A vision ? Certainly not. How could that be ? Had he not a letter in his hand ? Did he not see an envelope, a seal, paper, and writing ? Did he not know from whom it came ? It was all plain enough. Some one took a pen and ink, and wrote. Some one lighted a taper, and sealed it with wax. Was

not his name written on the letter, "*To Gwynplaine*" ? The paper was scented. All was clear. Gwynplaine knew the little man. The dwarf was a page. The gleaming scarlet was a livery. The page had given him a rendezvous for the same hour on the morrow, at the corner of London Bridge. Was London Bridge an illusion ? No, no ; everything was plain. There was no delirium. It was all reality. Gwynplaine was perfectly clear in his mind. It was not a phantasmagoria suddenly dissolving above his head, and fading into nothingness ; it was something that had really happened to him.

No, Gwynplaine was not mad, nor was he dreaming. He read the letter again. Well, yes. But then ? That *then* was terror-striking. There was a woman who desired him ! If so, let no one ever again pronounce the word incredible ! A woman desire him ! A woman who had seen his face ; a woman who was not blind ! And who was this woman ? An ugly one ? No ; a beauty. A gypsy ? No ; a duchess !

What was it all about, and what could it all mean ? What peril in such a triumph ! And how was he to help plunging headlong into it ? What ! that woman ? That siren, that goddess, that superb lady in the box, that light in the darkness ! It was she. Yes ; it was she !

His blood seemed to take fire throughout his veins. It was the beautiful unknown, — she who had so troubled his thoughts previously ; and his first tumultuous feelings about this woman returned. Forgetfulness is nothing but a palimpsest : an incident happens unexpectedly and all that was effaced revives in the blanks of wondering memory.

Gwynplaine thought that he had dismissed this image from his remembrance, but he found that it was still there ; she had put her mark in his brain, and without his

suspecting it the lines had been graven deep by reverie. A certain amount of evil had been done, and this train of thought, thenceforth, perhaps, irreparable, he now resumed eagerly. What! she desired him? What! the princess descend from her throne, the idol from its shrine, the statue from its pedestal, the phantom from its cloud? What! From the depths of the impossible had this chimera come! This deity of the sky! This radiant being! This nereid all glistening with jewels! This proud and unattainable beauty from the height of her radiant throne, was bending down to Gwynplaine! She had checked her chariot of the dawn, drawn by turtle-doves and dragons, before Gwynplaine, and said to him, "Come!" What! this terrible glory of being the object of such abasement from the empyrean, for Gwynplaine! This woman, if he could give that name to a form so starlike and majestic, this woman proposed herself, gave herself, delivered herself up to him! Wonder of wonders! A goddess prostituting herself for him! Superb arms opening in a cloud to clasp him to the bosom of a goddess, and that without degradation! Such majestic creatures cannot be sullied. The gods bathe themselves pure in light; and this goddess who came to him knew what she was doing. She was not ignorant of the incarnate hideousness of Gwynplaine. She had seen the mask that formed his face; and yet that mask had not caused her to draw back. Gwynplaine was loved notwithstanding it! Here was a thing that far surpassed all the marvels of dreams. Gwynplaine was loved in consequence of his mask. Far from repulsing the goddess, his hideousness attracted her. He was not only loved, he was desired. He was more than accepted, he was chosen. He, chosen!

Where this woman dwelt, in a region of matchless splendour, and in a state of perfect freedom, there were

princes in plenty, and she could have taken a prince; nobles, and she could have taken a noble; there were handsome, charming, and magnificent men, and she could have taken an Adonis: but whom had she chosen? Gnafron! She could have the mighty, six-winged seraphim, but she chose the larva crawling in the slime. On one side were royal highnesses and peers, grandeur, opulence, and glory; on the other, a mountebank,—but the mountebank won the day! What kind of scales could there be in the heart of this woman? By what measure did she weigh her love? She took off her ducal coronet and flung it at the feet of a clown! She took from her brow the Olympian aureole and placed it on the bristling head of a gnome! The world was turned topsy-turvy. The insects swarmed on high, the stars were scattered below, while the wonder-stricken Gwynplaine, overwhelmed by a flood of light and lying in the dust, was enshrined in glory. One all-powerful, indifferent to beauty and splendour, gave herself to a creature of night,—preferred Gwynplaine to Antinous. Impelled by curiosity, she entered the slums and even descended into them, and from this abdication of goddess-ship resulted this wonderful exaltation of the wretched. “You are hideous. I love you.” These words touched Gwynplaine in the ugly spot of pride. Pride is the heel in which all heroes are vulnerable. Gwynplaine was flattered in his vanity as a monster. He was loved for his deformity. He, too, was the exception, as much, and perhaps more, than the Jupiters and the Apollos. He felt superhuman, and so much a monster as to be a god. Fearful bewilderment!

But who was this woman? What did he know about her? Everything and nothing. She was a duchess, that he knew; he knew, too, that she was beautiful and rich; that she had liveries, lackeys, pages, and footmen

running with torches by the side of her coroneted carriage. He knew that she was in love with him,—at least, she said so. Of everything else he was ignorant. He knew her title, but not her name. He knew her wishes, but he knew nothing of her life. Was she married? Was she a widow or a maiden? Was she free? To what family did she belong? Were there snares, traps, dangers about her? Of the immorality existing on the heights of society; the caves on those summits, in which savage charmers dream amid the scattered skeletons of the loves which they have already preyed upon; of the extent of tragic cynicism to which the experiments of a woman may attain who believes herself to be beyond the reach of man,—of such things as these Gwynplaine had no idea. Nor had he even in his mind materials out of which to build up a conjecture, information concerning such things being very scanty in the social depths in which he lived. Still, he detected a shadow; he felt that a mist hung over all this brightness. Did he understand it? No. Could he guess at it? Still less. What was there behind that letter? One pair of folding-doors opening before him as another pair closed behind him, thus causing him a vague anxiety. On the one side an avowal; on the other an enigma,—avowal and enigma, which, like two mouths, one tempting, the other threatening, pronounce the same word, “Dare!”

Never had perfidious chance taken its measures better, nor timed more fitly the moment of temptation. Gwynplaine, moved by the influences of springtime, and by the sap rising in all things, was prompt to dream the dream of the flesh. The old Adam, who is not to be stamped out, and over whom none of us can triumph, was awaking in that backward youth, still a boy at twenty-four. It was just at the most stormy moment

of the crisis that this offer was made him, and the naked bosom of the Sphinx appeared before his dazzled eyes. Youth is an inclined plane. Gwynplaine stooped, and something pushed him forward. What? The season and the night. Who? The woman. Were there no month of April, man would be a great deal more virtuous. The budding plants are a set of accomplices! Love is the thief, Spring the receiver.

Gwynplaine was deeply agitated. There is a kind of unpleasant smoke preceding sin, in which the conscience cannot breathe. The nausea of hell steals over virtue in temptation. The yawning abyss emits an exhalation which warns the strong and turns the weak giddy. Gwynplaine was suffering from this mysterious discomfort. Dilemmas, transient and at the same time stubborn, were floating before him. Sin, presenting itself obstinately again and again to his mind, was taking form. The morrow, midnight? London Bridge, the page? Should he go? "Yes," cried the flesh; "No," cried the soul.

Nevertheless, we must remark that, strange as it may appear at first sight, Gwynplaine never once put himself the question, "Should he go?" quite distinctly. Reprehensible actions are like over-strong brandies,—you cannot swallow them at a single draught. You set down your glass; you will finish it presently; there is a strange taste even about that first drop. One thing is certain, he felt something behind him pushing him forward towards the unknown, and he trembled. He could catch a faint glimpse of a crumbling precipice, and he drew back, stricken with terror. He closed his eyes. He tried hard to convince himself that the adventure had never occurred, and to persuade himself into doubting his reason. This was evidently the best plan; the wisest thing he could do was to believe him-

self mad. Fatal fever! Every man, surprised by the unexpected, has at times felt the throb of such tragic pulsations. The observer ever listens with anxiety to the echoes resounding from the dull strokes of the battering-ram of destiny striking against a conscience.

One detail, however, is noteworthy: the effrontery of the adventure, which perhaps might have shocked a depraved man, never struck Gwynplaine. He saw only the grandeur of the woman. Alas! he felt flattered. His vanity assured him of victory only. To dream that he was the object of unchaste desire, rather than of love, would have required much greater wit than innocence possesses. He could not grasp the animal side of the goddess's nature.

A thousand conflicting ideas rushed into Gwynplaine's brain, now following each other singly, now crowding together. Then quiet reigned again, and he would lean his head on his hands, in a kind of mournful attention, like one who contemplates a landscape by night. Suddenly he realized that he was no longer thinking. His reverie had reached that point of utter bewilderment in which everything disappears from view. He remembered, too, that he had not entered the inn, and it was probably about two o'clock in the morning. He placed the letter which the page had brought him in his side-pocket, but perceiving that it was next his heart, he drew it out again, crumpled it up, and placed it in a pocket of his hose. He then directed his steps towards the inn, which he entered stealthily, and without awaking little Govicum, who had fallen asleep on the table, with his arms for a pillow, while waiting for him. He closed the door, lighted a candle at the lamp, fastened the bolt, turned the key in the lock, taking, mechanically, all the precautions usual to a man returning home late, ascended the staircase of the Green Box,

slipped into the old hovel which he used as a bedroom, looked at Ursus, who was asleep, blew out his candle, but did not go to bed.

Thus an hour passed away. Weary, at length, and fancying that bed and sleep were synonymous, he laid his head upon the pillow without undressing, making darkness the concession of closing his eyes. But the storm of emotions which assailed him had not ceased for an instant. Sleeplessness is a torture which night inflicts upon man. Gwynplaine suffered greatly. For the first time in his life, he was not satisfied with himself. Secret loathing mingled with gratified vanity. What was he to do. Day broke at last; he heard Ursus get up, but did not raise his eyelids. No truce for him, however. The letter was ever in his mind. Every word of it came back to him. In certain violent mental conflicts, thought becomes a liquid. It is convulsed, it heaves, and something like the dull roaring of the waves rises from it. Flood and flow, sudden shocks and whirls, the hesitation of the wave before the rock; hail and rain; clouds with the light shining through their breaks; the petty flights of useless foam; the wild swell broken in an instant; great efforts lost; wreck appearing all around; darkness and universal dispersion,—these things which are true of the sea, are equally true of man. Gwynplaine was a prey to such a storm.

In the height of his agony, and while his eyes were still closed, he heard an exquisite voice asking, "Are you asleep, Gwynplaine?" He opened his eyes with a start and sat up. Dea was standing in the half-open door. An ineffable smile was in her eyes and on her lips. She stood there, charming in the unconscious serenity of her radiance. Then came, as it were, a sacred moment. Gwynplaine gazed on her, startled, dazzled, awakened. Awakened from what? From

sleep? No, from sleeplessness. It was she, it was Dea; and suddenly he felt in the depths of his being a cessation of the storm and the sublime victory of good over evil. The miracle of the look from on high was accomplished; the blind girl, the sweet light-bearer, with no effort beyond her mere presence, dispelled the darkness within him; the curtain of cloud was dispersed from his soul as by an invisible hand, and a sky of azure, as though by celestial enchantment, again overspread Gwynplaine's conscience. In a moment he became, by the mere presence of that angel, the noble and good Gwynplaine, the innocent man.

CHAPTER II.

FROM GAY TO GRAVE.

HOW simple a miracle is, after all! It was the breakfast hour in the Green Box, and Dea had merely come to see why Gwynplaine had not joined them at table.

“It is you!” exclaimed Gwynplaine; and in that he had said everything. There was no other horizon, no vision for him now but the heaven where Dea was. His agitation was calmed,—calmed in such a manner as he alone can understand who has seen the smile spread swiftly over the ocean when the hurricane has passed away. There is nothing that becomes tranquil more quickly than the waves. This results from their power of absorption. And so it is with the human heart. Not always, however. Dea had but to show herself, and behind the dazzled Gwynplaine there was but a flight of phantoms. What a peace-maker is adoration!

A few minutes afterwards they were sitting opposite each other, Ursus between them, Homo at their feet. The teapot, hung over a little lamp, was on the table. Fibi and Vinos were outside, waiting. They breakfasted as they supped, in the centre compartment. From the position in which the narrow table was placed, Dea’s back was turned towards the aperture in the partition which was opposite the entrance door of the Green Box. Their knees were touching. Gwynplaine was pouring out tea for Dea. Suddenly she sneezed. Just at that

moment a thin smoke rose above the flame of the lamp, and something like a piece of paper fell into ashes. It was the smoke which had caused Dea to sneeze.

"What was that?" she asked.

"Nothing," replied Gwynplaine.

And he smiled. He had just burned the duchess's letter. The conscience of the man who loves is the guardian angel of the woman whom he loves. Unburdened of the letter, his relief was wondrous, and Gwynplaine exulted in his integrity as an eagle exults in his wings. It seemed to him as if his temptation had vanished with the smoke, and as if the duchess had crumbled into ashes with the paper.

Taking up their cups at random, and drinking one after the other from the same one, they talked,—a babble of lovers, a chattering of sparrows! Nonsense, worthy of Mother Goose or of Homer! With two loving hearts, seek no further for poetry; with two kisses for dialogue, go no further for music.

"Gwynplaine, I dreamed that we were animals, and had wings."

"Wings; that means birds," murmured Gwynplaine.

"Fools! it means angels," growled Ursus.

And their talk went on.

"If you did not exist, Gwynplaine!—"

"What then?"

"It could only be because there was no God."

"The tea is too hot; you will burn yourself, Dea."

"Blow on my cup."

"How beautiful you are this morning!"

"Do you know that I have a great many things to say to you?"

"Say them."

"I love you!"

"I adore you!"

And Ursus said aside, "By heaven, they are plain-spoken people!"

How blissful to lovers are their moments of silence! In them they gather, as it were, masses of love, which afterwards explode into sweet fragments.

Then came a pause, and afterwards Dea cried, —

"Do you know, in the evening, when we are playing our parts, at the moment when my hand touches your forehead,—oh, what a noble head yours is, Gwynplaine!—at the moment when I feel your hair beneath my fingers, I shiver; a heavenly joy comes over me, and I say to myself, 'In all this world of darkness which encompasses me, in this universe of solitude, in this great obscurity in which I live, in this quaking fear of myself and of everything, I have one prop; and he is here. It is he. It is you.'"

"Oh, you love me!" said Gwynplaine. "I, too, have no one but you on earth. You are everything to me. Dea, what would you have me do? What do you desire? What do you want?"

Dea answered, "I do not know. I am happy."

"Yes," replied Gwynplaine, "we are happy indeed!"

Ursus raised his voice severely: "So you are happy, are you? That's a crime. I have warned you before. You are happy! Then take care you are not seen. Take up as little room as you can. Happiness ought to hide itself in a hole. Make yourselves still less than you are, if that be possible. God measures the greatness of happiness by the insignificance of the happy. The happy should conceal themselves like malefactors. Shine out like the wretched glow-worms that you are, and you'll be trodden on; and serve you right too! What do you mean by all that love-making nonsense? I'm no duenna, whose business it is to watch lovers billing and cooing. I'm tired of it all, I tell you; and you may both go to the devil."

And feeling that his harsh tones were melting into tenderness, he drowned his emotion in a loud grumble.

"Father," said Dea, "how roughly you talk."

"That is because I don't like to see people too happy."

Here Homo re-echoed Ursus. His growl was heard from beneath the lovers' feet.

Ursus stooped down, and placed his hand on Homo's head: "That's right; you're in bad humour, too. You growl. The bristles are all on end on your pate. You don't like all this love-making. That's because you are wise. Hold your tongue all the same. You have had your say, and given your opinion; so be it. Now be silent."

The wolf growled again. Ursus looked under the table at him:—

"Be still, Homo! Come, don't dwell on it, you philosopher!"

But the wolf sat up, and looked towards the door, showing his teeth.

"What's wrong with you now?" said Ursus. And he caught hold of Homo by the skin of the neck.

Heedless of the wolf's growls, and wholly wrapt up in her own thoughts, and in the sound of Gwynplaine's voice, Dea sat silent, absorbed in that kind of ecstasy peculiar to the blind, which seems at times to give them a song to listen to in their hearts, and to make up to them for the vision which they lack by some strain of ideal music. Blindness is a cavern through which celestial harmonies are ever floating.

While Ursus was looking down, talking to Homo, Gwynplaine raised his eyes. He was about to drink a cup of tea. He did not drink it however, but slowly replaced it on the table. His fingers remained open, his eyes fixed. He scarcely breathed.

A man was standing in the doorway, behind Dea.

He was clad in black, with a hood. He wore a wig down to his eyebrows, and held in his hand an iron baton with a crown at each end. This baton was short and massive. Imagine a Medusa thrusting her head between two blossoming branches in paradise.

Ursus, who had heard some one enter, and who had raised his head without loosing his hold of Homo, recognized the terrible personage. He shook from head to foot, and whispered to Gwynplaine: "It's the wapentake."

Gwynplaine recollected. An exclamation of surprise was about to escape him, but he restrained it. The iron staff, with the crown at each end, was called the iron weapon. It was from this iron weapon, upon which the city officers of justice took the oath when they entered upon their duties, that the old wapentakes of the English police derived their name.

Behind the man in the wig, the frightened landlord could be dimly discerned in the shadow. Without saying a word — a personification of the *muta Themis* of the old charters — the man stretched his right arm over the radiant Dea, and touched Gwynplaine on the shoulder with the iron staff, at the same time pointing with his left thumb to the door of the Green Box behind him. These gestures, all the more imperious for the intruder's silence, meant, Follow me. "*Pro signo exundi, sursum trahe,*" says the old Norman record. He who was touched by the iron weapon had no right but the right of obedience. To that mute order there was no reply. The harsh penalties of the English law threatened the refractory.

Gwynplaine felt a shock under the rigid touch of the law; then he sat as though petrified. If, instead of having been merely grazed on the shoulder, he had been struck a violent blow on the head with the iron staff, he

could not have been worse stunned. He knew that the police officer summoned him to follow; but why? *That* he could not understand.

Ursus, too, was thrown into the most painful agitation, but he saw through matters pretty clearly. His thoughts flew to the jugglers and preachers, — his competitors, — to complaints made against the Green Box, against that delinquent the wolf, to his own affair with the three Bishopsgate commissioners; and who knows, perhaps — but that would be too dreadful — Gwynplaine's unbecoming and factious speeches touching the royal authority. He trembled violently. Dea was smiling.

Neither Gwynplaine nor Ursus uttered a word. They both had the same thought, — not to frighten Dea. It may have struck the wolf as well, for he ceased growling. True, Ursus did not loose him. Homo, however, was a prudent wolf when occasion required. Who is there who has not remarked this kind of intelligence in animals? It may be that to the extent to which a wolf can understand mankind he felt that he was an outlaw.

Gwynplaine rose. Resistance was useless, as he knew, for he remembered Ursus' words. He remained standing in front of the wapentake. The latter raised the iron staff from Gwynplaine's shoulder, and drawing it back, held it out straight in an attitude of command, — a constable's attitude which was well understood in those days by the people, and which expressed the following order: "Let this man, and no other, follow me. The rest remain where they are. Silence!" No curious followers were allowed. In all ages the police have had a taste for arrests of the kind. This description of seizure was termed sequestration of the person.

The wapentake turned round in one motion, like a piece of mechanism revolving on its own pivot, and

with grave and magisterial step proceeded towards the door of the Green Box.

Gwynplaine looked at Ursus. The latter went through a pantomime composed as follows: he shrugged his shoulders, placed both elbows close to his hips, with his hands out, and knitted his brows into chevrons, all intended to signify: "We must submit to the inevitable."

Gwynplaine looked at Dea. She was still in a dream. She was still smiling. He put the tips of his fingers to his lips, and waved her an unutterable kiss.

Ursus, who had partially recovered from his terror now that the wapentake's back was turned, seized this opportunity to whisper in Gwynplaine's ear: "On your life, do not speak until you are questioned."

Gwynplaine, with the same care to avoid noise that he would have taken in a sick room, took his hat and cloak from the hook on the partition, wrapped himself up to the eyes in the cloak, and pulled his hat down over his forehead. Not having been to bed, he had his working clothes still on, and his leather collar round his neck. Once more he looked at Dea. Having reached the door, the wapentake raised his staff and began to descend the steps, Gwynplaine following as if the man was dragging him by an invisible chain. Ursus watched Gwynplaine leave the Green Box. At that moment the wolf gave a low growl, but Ursus quieted him by whispering, "He is coming back."

In the yard, Master Nicless was trying to silence with imperious gestures the cries of terror raised by Vinos and Fibi, as they watched Gwynplaine led away by this formidable-looking official. The two girls were like petrifications; they had the appearance of stalactites. Govicum, stunned, was gazing open-mouthed out of a window.

The wapentake preceded Gwynplaine by a few steps,

never once turning round or looking at him, with that cold tranquillity which the knowledge that one is the law imparts. In death-like silence they both crossed the yard, passed through the dark tap-room, and reached the street. A few passers-by had collected about the inn door, and the justice of the quorum was there at the head of a squad of police. The idlers, stupefied, and without uttering a word, opened out and stood aside, with true English discipline, at the sight of the constable's staff. The wapentake moved off in the direction of the narrow street then called the Little Strand, skirting the Thames; and Gwynplaine, with the justice of the quorum's men in line on each side of him like a double hedge, wrapped in his cloak as in a shroud, left the inn farther and farther behind him as he followed the silent man, like a statue following a spectre.

CHAPTER III.

LEX, REX, FEX.

UNEXPLAINED arrest, which would greatly astonish an Englishman nowadays, was then a very common proceeding of the police. Recourse was had to it, notwithstanding the Habeas Corpus Act, up to George II.'s time, especially in such delicate cases as were provided for by *lettres de cachet* in France; and one of the accusations against which Walpole had to defend himself was that he had caused, or allowed, Neuhoﬀ to be arrested in that manner. The accusation was probably without foundation, for Neuhoﬀ, King of Corsica, was put in prison by his creditors.

These silent seizures of the person, very usual with the Holy Væhme in Germany, were countenanced by German custom, which regulates one half of the old English laws, and recommended in certain cases by Norman custom, which rules the other half. Justinian's chief of the palace police was called "Silentiarius Imperialis." The English magistrates who practised the seizures in question relied upon numerous Norman texts: "Canes latrant, sergentes silent," and "Sergenter agere, id est tacere." They quoted Landulphus Sagax, paragraph 16: "Facit Imperator silentium." They quoted the charter of King Philip in 1307: "Multos tenebimus bastonerios qui, obmutescentes, sergentare valeant." They quoted the statutes of Henry I. of England, cap. 53: "Surge signo jussus. Taciturnior

esto. Hoc est esse in captione regis." They took advantage especially of the following prescription, held to form part of the ancient feudal franchises of England: "Sous les viscomtes sont les serjans de l'espée, lesquels doivent justicier vertueusement à l'espée tous ceux qui suient malveses compagnies, gens diffamez d'aucuns crimes, et gens fuites et forbanuis . . . et les doivent si vigoureusement et discrètement appréhender, que la bonne gent qui sont paisibles soient gardez paisiblement et que les malfeteurs soient espoantés." To be thus arrested was to be seized "à le glaive de l'espée."¹ The juriconsults referred besides "in Charta Ludovici Hutuni pro Normannis," chapter *Servientes spathæ*. The "*Servientes spathæ*," in the gradual approach of base Latin to our idioms, became "*sergentes spadæ*."

These silent arrests were the contrary of the *Clameur de Haro*, and gave warning that it was advisable to hold one's tongue until such time as light should be thrown upon certain matters still shrouded in mystery. They signified questions reserved, and showed in the operation of the police a certain amount of *raison d'état*. The legal term "private" was applied to arrests of this description. It was thus that Edward III., according to some chroniclers, caused Mortimer to be seized in the bed of his mother, Isabella of France. This again, we may venture to doubt, for Mortimer sustained a siege in his town before being captured. Warwick, the king-maker, delighted in practising this mode of "attaching people." Cromwell practised it, especially in Connaught; and it was with this precaution of silence that Trailie Arklo, a relation of the Earl of Ormond, was arrested at Kilmacough.

These seizures of the body by a mere gesture of authority, represented rather a summons to appear than a

¹ *Vetus Consuetudo Normanniæ*, MS. part i. sect. 1, chap. xi.

warrant of arrest. Sometimes they were but processes of inquiry, and even argued, by the silence imposed upon all, a certain consideration for the person seized. For the mass of the people, little versed as they were in such shades of difference, they had peculiar terrors.

It must not be forgotten that in 1705, and even much later, England was far from being what she is to-day. The general features of its constitution were confused and, at times, very oppressive. Daniel Defoe, who had had a taste of the pillory himself, characterizes the social order of England, somewhere in his writings, as "the iron hands of the law." There was not only the law, but there was its arbitrary administration. We have but to recall Steele, ejected from Parliament; Locke, driven from his professorship; Hobbes and Gibbon, compelled to leave the country; Charles Churchill, Hume, and Priestly, persecuted; John Wilkes sent to the Tower. The task would be a long one, were we to enumerate the victims of the statute against seditious libel. The inquisition had gained quite a foothold throughout Europe, and its police practice was taken as a guide. A monstrous outrage against all rights was possible in England. We have only to recall the "Gazetier Cuirassé." In the middle of the eighteenth century, Louis XV. had writers whose works displeased him arrested in Piccadilly. It is also true that George II. laid hands on the Pretender in France, right in the middle of the hall at the opera. Those were two long arms, — that of the King of France reaching to London; that of the King of England, reaching to Paris! Such was the liberty of the period.

We may add that they were fond of putting people to death privately in prisons, — sleight-of-hand mingled with capital punishment; a hideous expedient, to which England is reverting at the present moment, thus giving

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to the world the strange spectacle of a great people, which, in its desire to take the better part, chooses the worse; and which, having before it the past on one side and progress on the other, loses its way, and mistakes night for day.

CHAPTER IV.

URSUS PLAYS THE SPY ON THE POLICE.

AS we have already said, according to the very severe laws of those days, a summons to follow the wapentake, addressed to an individual, implied to all other persons present an order not to stir. Some curious idlers, however, were stubborn, and followed from afar off the *cortége* which had taken Gwynplaine into custody.

Ursus was one of the number. He had been petrified with astonishment, as one certainly had reason to be. But Ursus, so often assailed by the surprises incident to a wandering life, and by all sorts of mischances, was prepared for immediate action, like a ship-of-war, and could call to the post of danger the whole crew, — that is to say, the aid of all his faculties. He flung off his stupor, and began to think. He strove not to give way to emotion, but to meet the danger calmly and thoughtfully. To look facts in the face is the duty of every sensible person.

Presently he asked himself: What could he do? Gwynplaine being taken, Ursus was tortured by a two-fold fear, — a fear for Gwynplaine, which instigated him to follow his *protégé*, and a fear for himself, which urged him to remain where he was. Ursus had the intrepidity of a fly, and the impassibility of a sensitive plant. His agitation was indescribable. Nevertheless, he heroically decided to brave the law, and to follow the wapentake,

so anxious was he concerning the fate of Gwynplaine. His terror must have been great to prompt so much courage. To what valiant acts will fear drive even a hare! The chamois in despair jumps a precipice. To be terrified into imprudence is one of the forms of fear.

Gwynplaine had been kidnapped rather than arrested. The operation of the police had been executed so rapidly that the denizens of the fair-ground, which was little frequented at that hour of the morning, were scarcely aware of the circumstance. Scarcely any one in the caravans had any idea that the wapentake had come to arrest Gwynplaine. Hence, the smallness of the crowd. Gwynplaine, thanks to his cloak and his hat, which nearly concealed his face, could not be recognized by the passers-by.

Before he went out to follow Gwynplaine, Ursus took a precaution. He spoke to Master Nicless, to the boy Govicum, and to Fibi and Vinos, and insisted that they should keep absolute silence before Dea, who was ignorant of everything; that they should not utter a syllable that could make her suspect what had occurred; that they should make her understand that the cares of the management of the Green Box necessitated the absence of Gwynplaine and Ursus; that, besides, it would soon be the time of her daily siesta, and that before she awoke he and Gwynplaine would have returned; that all that had taken place had arisen from a mistake; that it would be very easy for Gwynplaine and himself to clear themselves before the magistrate and police; that a touch of the finger would put the matter straight, after which they should both return; above all, that no one should say a word on the subject to Dea. Having given these directions, he departed.

Ursus was able to follow Gwynplaine without being noticed. Though he kept at the greatest possible dis-

tance, he so managed as not to lose sight of him. Boldness in ambuscade is the bravery of the timid. After all, notwithstanding the solemnity of the attendant circumstances, Gwynplaine might have been summoned before the magistrate for some unimportant infraction of the law. Ursus assured himself that the question would be decided at once.

The mystery would be solved under his very eyes by the direction taken by the *cortège* when it reached the entrance to the street leading into the Little Strand. If it turned to the left, it would conduct Gwynplaine to the justice hall in Southwark. In that case there would be little to fear. Some trifling municipal offence, an admonition from the magistrate, two or three shillings to pay, and Gwynplaine would be set at liberty, and the performance of "Chaos Vanquished" would take place in the evening as usual. In that case no one would know that anything unusual had happened. If the *cortège* turned to the right, matters would look more serious. There were frightful places in that direction.

When the wapentake, leading the file of guards between whom Gwynplaine walked, reached the small streets, Ursus watched him breathlessly. There are moments in which a man's whole being passes into his eyes. Which way were they going to turn? They turned to the right.

Ursus, staggering with terror, leaned against a wall for support. There is no hypocrisy greater than the words we often say to ourselves, "I wish to know the worst!" At heart we do not wish it at all. We have a dreadful dread of knowing it. Agony is mingled with a dim effort not to see the end. We do not own it to ourselves, but we would draw back if we dared; and when we have advanced, we reproach ourselves for having done so.

Thus did Ursus. He shuddered as he thought: "Things are indeed going wrong. I should have found it out soon enough. What business had I to follow Gwynplaine?" Having made this reflection, man being but self-contradiction, he increased his pace, and hastened to get nearer the *cortége*, so as not to lose sight of Gwynplaine in the labyrinth of small streets.

The *cortége* of police could not move quickly on account of its solemnity. The wapentake led it. The justice of the quorum closed it. This order compelled a certain deliberation of movement. All the majesty possible in an official shone in the justice of the quorum. His costume held a middle place between the splendid robe of a doctor of music of Oxford, and the sober black habiliments of a doctor of divinity of Cambridge. He wore the dress of a gentleman under a long godebert, which is a mantle trimmed with the fur of the Norwegian hare. He was half Goth and half fop in his attire, wearing a wig like Lamoignon, and sleeves like Tristan l'Hermite. His great round eye watched Gwynplaine with the fixity of an owl's. He walked with measured tread. Never did honest man look fiercer.

Ursus, who had lost his way for a moment in the tangled skein of streets, overtook, close to Saint Mary Overy, the *cortége*, which had fortunately been retarded in the churchyard by a fight between children and dogs, — a common incident in the streets in those days. "Dogs and boys," says the old registers of police, placing the dogs before the boys. A man being taken before a magistrate by the police was, after all, an every-day affair, and each one having his own business to attend to, the few followers soon dispersed. There remained but Ursus on the track of Gwynplaine.

They passed two chapels opposite each other, belonging the one to the Recreative Religionists, the other to

the Hallelujah League,—sects which flourished then, and which still exist at the present day. Then the *cortége* wound from street to street, making a zig-zag, choosing by preference lanes not yet built on, roads where the grass grew, and deserted alleys.

At length the *cortége* stopped in a narrow lane with no houses except two or three hovels. This narrow alley was bordered with two walls, the one on the left, low; the other, high. The high wall was black, and built in the Saxon style with narrow holes, scorpions, and large square gratings over narrow loop-holes. There was no window on it, but here and there slits, old embrasures for cross bows and long bows. At the foot of this high wall, like the hole at the bottom of a rat-trap, was a small wicket gate. This small door, encased in a full, heavy girding of stone, had a grated peep-hole, a heavy knocker, a large lock, hinges thick and knotted, a bristling of nails, an armour of plates, and hinges, so that altogether it was more of iron than of wood. There was no one in the lane,—no shops, no pedestrians; but in it there was a continual uproar, as if the lane ran parallel with a torrent. There was a tumult of voices and of carriages. It seemed as if on the other side of the black edifice there must be a great street, doubtless the principal street of Southwark, one end of which ran into the Canterbury road, and the other on to London Bridge.

All the length of the lane, except the *cortége* which surrounded Gwynplaine, a watcher would have seen no human face save that of Ursus peering out from the shadow of the corner of the wall; looking, yet fearing to see. He had posted himself behind the wall at a turn of the lane.

The constables grouped themselves before the wicket. Gwynplaine was in the centre, the wapentake and his

baton of iron being now behind him. The justice of the quorum raised the knocker and struck the door three times. The loop-hole opened. The justice of the quorum said, "By order of her Majesty." The heavy door of oak and iron turned on its hinges, revealing a dark opening, like the mouth of a cave. A grim vault yawned in the shadow. Ursus saw Gwynplaine disappear within it.

CHAPTER V.

A FEARFUL PLACE.

THE wapentake entered behind Gwynplaine; then the justice of the quorum; then the constables. The heavy door swung to, closing hermetically on the stone sills, without any one seeing who had opened or shut it. It seemed as if the bolts re-entered their sockets of their own accord. Some of these mechanisms, the inventions of ancient intimidation, still exist in old prisons,—doors where you saw no door-keeper. With them the entrance to a prison becomes like the entrance to a tomb.

This wicket was the lower door of Southwark Jail. There was nothing in the harsh and worm-eaten aspect of this edifice to soften the air of rigour appropriate to a prison. Originally a pagan temple, built by the Catieuchlans for the Mogons, ancient English gods, it became a palace for Ethelwolfe and a fortress for Edward the Confessor; after which it was elevated to the dignity of a prison, in 1199, by John Lackland. Such was Southwark Jail. This jail, at first intersected by a street, — as Chenonceaux is by a river, — had been for a century or two a gate, that is to say, the gate of a suburb; the passage had then been walled up. There are still several prisons of this kind in England — Newgate, in London; Westgate, in Canterbury; Canongate, in Edinburgh; the Bastille, in France, was originally a gate. Almost all the jails of England present the same appearance, — a high wall without and a hive

of cells within. Nothing could be more funereal than the appearance of these prisons, where spiders and justice spun their webs, and where John Howard, that ray of light, had not yet penetrated. Like the old Gehenna of Brussels, they might well have been designated Treurenberg,—“the house of tears.” Before such buildings, at once so savage and inhospitable, men felt the same distress that the ancient navigators suffered before the hell of slaves mentioned by Plautus,—islands of creaking chains, *ferrirepiditæ insulæ*,—when they passed near enough to hear the clank of the fetters.

Southwark Jail, an old place of exorcisms and torture, was originally used solely for the imprisonment of sorcerers, as was proved by two verses engraved on a defaced stone at the foot of the wicket:—

Sunt arreptitii, vexati dæmone multo
Est energumenus, quem dæmon possidet unus, —

lines which draw a subtle, delicate distinction between the demoniac and the man possessed of a devil. At the bottom of this inscription, nailed flat against the wall, was a stone ladder, originally of wood, but which had been changed into stone by being buried in earth of petrifying quality at a place called Apsley Gowis, near Woburn Abbey.

The prison of Southwark, now demolished, opened on two streets, between which, as a gate, it formerly served as a means of communication. It had two doors, — in the large street a door used by the authorities; and in the lane the criminals’ door, used by the rest of the living and by the dead also, because when a prisoner in the jail died, it was through that doorway his body was carried out, — a liberation not to be despised. Death is release into infinity. It was by this doorway that Gwynplaine had been taken into the prison.

The lane, as we have said, was nothing but a little passage, paved with flints, enclosed between two walls. There is one of the same kind in Brussels called *Rue d'une Personne*. The walls were unequal in height. The high one was the prison; the low one, the cemetery (the enclosure for the mortuary remains of the jail), was not higher than the ordinary stature of a man. In it, almost opposite the prison wicket, was a gate. The dead had only to cross the street; the cemetery was but twenty yards from the jail. Above the high wall loomed a gallows; on the low one was sculptured a Death's head. Neither of these walls made its opposite neighbour more cheerful.

CHAPTER VI.

THE KIND OF MAGISTRACY UNDER THE WIGS OF FORMER DAYS.

A PERSON passing down the main street of Southwark just at that moment would have seen drawn up before the main entrance to the jail, a travelling carriage, recognized as such by its imperial. A few idlers surrounded the carriage. On it was a coat-of-arms, and a personage had been seen to descend from it and enter the prison, — “probably a magistrate,” conjectured the crowd. Many of the English magistrates were noble, and almost all had the right of bearing arms. In France blazon and robe were almost contradictory terms. The Duke Saint-Simon says, in speaking of magistrates, “People of that class.” In England, a gentleman was not despised for being a judge.

There are travelling magistrates in England; they are called judges of circuit, and this carriage was unquestionably the vehicle of a judge on circuit. Much less comprehensible was the fact that the supposed magistrate got down, not from the carriage itself, but from the box, a place which is not habitually occupied by the owner. Another unusual thing. People travelled at that period in England in two ways, — by coach, at the rate of a shilling for five miles; and by post, paying three half-pence per mile, and twopence to the postilion after each stage. A private carriage, whose owner desired to travel by relays, paid as many shillings per horse per mile as the horseman paid pence.

The carriage drawn up before the jail in Southwark had four horses and two postilions, which displayed princely state. Another thing which excited and disconcerted conjectures to the utmost was the circumstance that the carriage was sedulously closed. The blinds were drawn up. The glasses in front were darkened by blinds; every opening through which the eye might have penetrated was masked. From without, nothing inside could be seen; and most probably from within, nothing outside could be seen. However, it did not seem probable that there was any one in the carriage.

Southwark being in Surrey, the prison was within the jurisdiction of the sheriff of that county. Such distinct jurisdictions were very frequent in England. Thus, for example, the Tower of London was not supposed to be situated in any county; that is to say, legally, it was considered to be in the air. The Tower recognized no authority of jurisdiction except in its own constable, who was qualified as *custos turris*. The Tower had its own special jurisdiction, church, court of justice, and government. The authority of its *custos* or constable extended, outside of London, over twenty-one hamlets. As in Great Britain legal peculiarities are engrafted one upon another, the office of the master gunner of England was derived from the Tower of London. Other legal customs seem still more whimsical. Thus, the English Court of Admiralty consults and applies the laws of Rhodes and of Oleron, a French island which was once English.

The sheriff of a county was a person of high consideration. He was always an esquire, and sometimes a knight. He was called *spectabilis* in the old deeds, "a man to be looked at," a kind of intermediate title between *illustris* and *clarissimus*,—less than the first, more than the second. Long ago the sheriffs of the

counties were chosen by the people; but Edward II., and after him Henry VI., having claimed their nomination for the crown, the office of sheriff became a royal emanation. They all received their commissions from majesty, except the sheriff of Westmoreland, whose office was hereditary, and the sheriffs of London and Middlesex, who were elected by the councilmen in the common hall. Sheriffs of Wales and Chester possessed certain fiscal prerogatives. These appointments are all still in existence in England, but, subjected little by little to the friction of manners and ideas, they have lost much of their former character. It was the duty of the sheriff of the county to escort and protect the judges on circuit. As we have two arms, he had two officers,—his right arm the under-sheriff, his left arm the justice of the quorum. The justice of the quorum, assisted by the bailiff of the hundred, termed the wapentake, apprehended, examined, and, under the responsibility of the sheriff, imprisoned, for trial by the judges of circuit, thieves, murderers, rebels, vagabonds, and all sorts of felons. The shade of difference between the under-sheriff and the justice of the quorum, in their hierarchical service towards the sheriff was, that the under-sheriff accompanied and the justice of the quorum assisted.

The sheriff held two courts,—one fixed and central, the county court, and a movable court, the circuit court. He thus represented both unity and ubiquity. He might as judge be aided and informed on legal questions by the serjeant of the coif, called *sergens coifæ*, who is a serjeant-at-law, and who wears under his black skull-cap a fillet of white Chambray lawn. The sheriff relieved the jails of their inmates. When he arrived at any town in his circuit, he had a right to try the prisoners, and either released or executed them as the case might be. This was called a jail delivery. The sheriff presented bills

of indictment to the twenty-four members of the grand jury. If they approved, they wrote above, *billa vera*; if the contrary, they wrote *ignoramus*. In the latter case the accusation was annulled, and the sheriff had the privilege of tearing up the bill. If during the deliberation a juror died, this legally acquitted the prisoner and made him innocent, and the sheriff, who had the privilege of arresting the accused, had also that of setting him at liberty.

That which made the sheriff universally feared and respected was the fact that he had charge of executing all the orders of her Majesty, — a fearful latitude. An arbitrary power lodges in such commissions. The officers termed vergers, the coroners making part of the sheriff's *cortége*, and the clerks of the market as escort, with gentlemen on horseback and their servants in livery, made a handsome suite. The sheriff, says Chamberlayne, is the "life of justice, of law, and of the county."

In England an insensible demolition constantly pulverizes and disintegrates laws and customs. You must understand in our day that neither the sheriff, the wapentake, nor the justice of the quorum could exercise their functions as they did then. There was in the England of the past a certain confusion of powers, whose ill-defined attributes resulted in their overstepping their real bounds at times, — a thing which would be impossible at the present day. The usurpation of power by police and justices has ceased. We believe that even the word "wapentake" has changed its meaning. It implied a magisterial function; now it signifies a territorial division: it specified the centurion; it now specifies the cantred (*centum*).

Moreover, in those days the sheriff of the county combined in his authority, which was at once royal and municipal, that of the two magistrates formerly known

in France as the civil lieutenant of Paris and the lieutenant of police. The civil lieutenant of Paris is pretty well described in an old police note: "The civil lieutenant had no objection to domestic quarrels, because he always has the pickings." ¹ As to the lieutenant of police, he was a redoubtable person, multiple and vague. The best personification of him was René d'Argenson, who, as Saint-Simon remarked, displayed in his face the three judges of hell united. These three judges of the infernal region, as we have already seen, sat enthroned at Bishopsgate, London.

¹ July 22, 1704.

CHAPTER VII.

SHUDDERING.

WHEN Gwynplaine heard the wicket shut, creaking in all its bolts, he trembled. It seemed to him that the door which had just closed was the communication between light and darkness, — opening on one side on the living, human crowd, and on the other on a dead world; and now that everything illumined by the sun was behind him, and he had overstepped the boundary of life, and was standing without it, his heart contracted. What were they going to do with him? What did it all mean? Where was he? He saw nothing around him; he found himself in perfect darkness. The closing of the door had momentarily blinded him. The window in the door had been closed as well. No loophole, no lamp. Such were the precautions of old times. It was forbidden to light the entrance to the jails, so that new-comers could take no observations. Gwynplaine extended his arms, and touched the wall on the right side and on the left. He was in a passage. Little by little a cavernous daylight, exuding, no one knows whence, and which floats about dark places, and to which the dilatation of the pupil slowly adjusts itself, enabled him to distinguish an object here and there, and the corridor became dimly visible before him.

Gwynplaine, who knew naught of penal severities, save through the exaggerations of Ursus, felt as though he had been seized by a sort of gigantic hand. To be caught in the mysterious toils of the law is frightful. He who is brave in all other dangers, is disconcerted in

the presence of justice. Why? Is it because the justice of man works in twilight, and the judge gropes his way? Gwynplaine remembered what Ursus had told him of the necessity for silence. He wished to see Dea again; he felt some discretionary instinct, which urged him not to irritate. Sometimes, to wish to be enlightened is to make matters worse; but on the other hand, the weight of the adventure was so overwhelming that he gave way at length and could not restrain a question.

"Gentlemen," said he, "whither are you taking me?"

They made no answer. It was the law of silent capture, and the Norman text is formal, — *A silentiariis ostio, præpositis introducti sunt.*

This silence froze Gwynplaine. Up to that moment he had believed himself to be firm and self-sufficing. To be self-sufficing is to be powerful. He had lived isolated from the world, and imagined that being alone he was unassailable; and now all at once he felt himself under the pressure of a hideous collective force. How was he to combat that horrible anonyma, the law? He felt faint under the perplexity; a fear of an unknown nature had found a fissure in his armour; besides, he had not slept, he had not eaten, he had scarcely moistened his lips with a cup of tea. The whole night had been passed in a kind of delirium, and the fever was still upon him. He was thirsty, perhaps hungry; and the craving of the stomach disorders everything. Since the previous evening all kinds of incidents had befallen him. The emotions which had tormented had sustained him. Without the storm a sail would be a rag. But his was the excessive feebleness of the rag, which the wind inflates till it tears it. He felt himself sinking. Was he about to fall unconscious on the pavement? To faint is the resource of a woman, and the humiliation of a man. He hardened himself, but he trembled nevertheless.

CHAPTER VIII.

LAMENTATION.

THEY began to move forward through the passage. There was no preliminary registry, no place of record. The prisons in those days were not overburdened with documents. They were content to close round you without knowing why. To be a prison, and to hold prisoners, sufficed.

The procession was obliged to lengthen itself out, by reason of the narrowness of the corridor. They walked almost in single file; first the wapentake, then Gwynplaine, then the justice of the quorum, then the constables, advancing in a group, and completely blocking up the passage behind Gwynplaine. The passage narrowed. Now Gwynplaine touched the walls with both his elbows. In the roof, which was made of flints, dashed with cement, was a succession of projecting granite arches contracting the passage still more. He had to stoop to pass under them. No rapid advance was possible in that corridor. Any one trying to escape through it would have been compelled to move slowly. The passage twisted. All entrails are tortuous, — those of a prison as well as those of a man. Here and there, sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left, spaces in the wall, square and closed by large iron gratings, afforded glimpses of flights of stairs, some descending and some ascending.

They reached a closed door; it opened. They passed through, and it closed again. Then they came to a

second door, which admitted them, then to a third, which also turned on its hinges. These doors seemed to open and shut of themselves. No person was visible. As the corridor contracted, the roof grew lower, until at length it was impossible to stand upright. Moisture exuded from the wall. Drops of water fell from the vaulted roof. The slabs that paved the corridor were covered with slime. The pale, wan light became more and more pall-like. Air was deficient, and what was singularly ominous, the passage seemed to be a descent. Close observation was necessary to perceive that there was such a descent. In darkness even a gentle declivity is portentous. Nothing is more fearful than the vague evils to which we are led by imperceptible degrees. It is awful to descend into unknown depths.

How long they proceeded thus, Gwynplaine could not tell. Moments passed under such crushing agony seem immeasurably prolonged. Suddenly they halted. The darkness was intense. The corridor had widened somewhat. Gwynplaine heard close to him a sound similar to that made by a Chinese gong. It was the wapentake striking his wand against a sheet of iron. The sheet of iron was a door, — not a door on hinges, but a door which could be raised and lowered; something like a porteullis.

There was a sound of creaking in a groove, and Gwynplaine was suddenly face to face with a bit of square light. The sheet of metal had just been raised into a slit in the vault, like the door of a mouse-trap. An opening had appeared. The light was not daylight, but glimmer; but on the dilated eyeballs of Gwynplaine the pale ray struck like a flash of lightning. It was some time before he could distinguish anything. To see with dazzled eyes is as difficult as it is to see in darkness. At length, by degrees, the pupil of his eye adapted it-

self to the light, just as it had adapted itself to the darkness, and he was able to distinguish objects. The light, which had seemed at first too bright, settled into its proper hue and became livid. He cast a glance into the yawning space before him, and what he saw was terrible.

At his feet were about twenty steps, steep, narrow, worn, almost perpendicular, without balustrade on either side, — a sort of stone ridge cut out from the side of a wall into stairs, and leading into a very deep cell, into which one gazed down as into a well. The cell was large, and if it was really the bottom of a well, it must have been a cyclopean one. The idea that the old word “cul-de-basse-fosse” awakens in the mind could only be applied to it if it was supposed to be a den of wild beasts. The cell was neither flagged nor paved. The bottom was of that cold, moist earth, peculiar to deep places. In the midst of the cell, four low and disproportioned columns sustained a deeply arched canopy, the four mouldings of which united in the interior of the canopy, something like the inside of a mitre. This covering, similar to those under which sarcophagi were formerly placed, rose nearly to the top of the vault, and made a sort of central chamber in the cave, if that can be styled a chamber which has only pillars in place of walls. From the centre of the arch hung a brass lamp, round and barred like the window of a prison. This lamp threw around it — on the pillars, on the vault, on the circular wall which was seen dimly behind the pillars — a wan light, cut by bars of shadow. This was the light which had at first dazzled Gwynplaine; now it seemed only a confused redness. There was no other light in the cell, — neither window, nor door, nor loop-hole.

Between the four pillars, exactly under the lamp, in

In the Torture Chamber.

Photo-Etching. — From Drawing by G. Rochegrosse



the spot where there was most light, a pale and terrible form lay extended on the ground. It was lying on its back; a head was visible, the eyes of which were shut; also a body, the chest of which was a shapeless mass. The four limbs belonging to the body were drawn towards the four pillars by four chains fastened to each foot and each hand in the position of the cross of Saint Andrew. These chains were fastened to an iron ring at the base of each column. The form was thus held immovable, in the horrible position of being quartered, and had the icy look of a livid corpse. It was naked. It was a man.

Gwynplaine stood at the top of the stairs as if petrified, looking down. Suddenly he heard a rattle in the throat. The corpse was alive.

Close to the spectre, in one of the arches, on each side of a tall chair placed on a large flat stone, stood two men enveloped in long black cloaks; and in the chair sat an old man, dressed in a red robe, pale, motionless, and austere, holding a bunch of roses in his hand. The bunch of roses would have enlightened any one less ignorant than Gwynplaine. The right of judging with a nosegay in his hand implied the holder to be both a royal and municipal magistrate. The Lord Mayor of London still keeps up the custom. To assist the deliberations of the judges was the function of the earliest roses of the season.

The old man seated in the chair was the sheriff of the county of Surrey. His was the majestic rigidity of a Roman dignitary. The chair was the only seat in the cell. Beside it was a table covered with papers and books, on which lay the long white wand of the sheriff. The men standing by the side of the sheriff were two doctors, one of medicine, the other of law; the latter recognizable by the serjeant's coif over his wig. Both wore black robes, — one of the shape worn by judges,

the other by doctors. Men of these professions wear mourning for the deaths which they cause.

Behind the sheriff, on the edge of the flat stone under the seat, — with a writing-table near him, a bundle of papers on his knees, and a sheet of parchment on the bundle, — crouched a secretary, in a round wig, with a pen in his hand, in the attitude of a man ready to write. This secretary was of the class called keeper of the bag, as was shown by a bag at his feet. These bags, employed in former times in law-suits were termed bags of justice. Leaning against a pillar with folded arms was a man clothed entirely in leather, — the hangman's assistant. These men seemed as if they had been fixed by enchantment in their funereal postures round the chained man. No one of them either spoke or moved. A fearful silence brooded over all.

What Gwynplaine saw was a torture chamber. There were many such in England. The crypt of Beauchamp Tower long served this purpose, as did also a cell in the Lollards' prison. A place of this nature is still to be seen in London, called "the Vaults of Lady Place." In this last-mentioned chamber there is a grate for the purpose of heating the irons. All the prisons of King John's time (and Southwark Jail was one) had their chambers of torture.

The scene which is about to follow was in those days a frequent occurrence in England, and might even be repeated to-day, since the same laws are still unrepealed. England presents the curious spectacle of a barbarous code of laws living on the best of terms with liberty. We confess that they make an excellent family party. Some distrust, however, might not be undesirable. In the case of a crisis, a return to the penal code would not be impossible. English legislation is a tamed tiger with a velvet paw, but the claws are still there. Cut

the claws of the law, and you will do well. Law almost ignores right. On one side is penalty, on the other humanity. Philosophers protest; but it will take some time yet before the justice of man is assimilated to the justice of God.

Respect for the law,—that is the English phrase. In England they venerate the laws so much that they never repeal any; but they save themselves from the consequences of this veneration by never putting these laws into execution. An old law falls into disuse like an old woman, and they never think of killing either one or the other. They cease to make use of them,—that is all. Both are at liberty to consider themselves still young and beautiful. They allow them to suppose that they still exist. This politeness is called respect. Norman custom is very wrinkled, but that does not prevent many an English judge from casting sheep's eyes at her. They stick amorously to an antiquated atrocity, so long as it is Norman. What can be more savage than the gibbet? In 1867 a man was sentenced to be cut into quarters and offered to a woman, — the queen.

Still, torture was never practised in England; history asserts this as a fact. The assurance of history is wonderful. Matthew of Westminster mentions that the "Saxon law, very clement and kind," did not punish criminals by death; and adds that "it limited itself to cutting off the nose and scooping out the eyes." That was all!

Gwynplaine, scared and haggard, stood at the top of the steps, trembling in every limb. He shuddered from head to foot. He tried to think what crime he could have committed. To the silence of the wapentake succeeded the vision of torture to be endured. It was a step forward; but a tragic one. The grim enigma of his seizure was becoming more and more obscure. The

human form lying on the earth rattled in its throat again. Gwynplaine felt some one touch him gently on the shoulder. It was the wapentake. Gwynplaine knew that meant that he was to descend. He obeyed. He descended the stairs step by step. They were very narrow, each eight or nine inches in height. There was no hand-rail. The descent required caution. Two steps behind Gwynplaine followed the wapentake, holding up his iron weapon; and at the same distance behind the wapentake, the justice of the quorum.

As he descended the steps, Gwynplaine felt an indescribable extinction of hope. There was death in every step. With each one that he descended a ray of the light within him died. Growing paler and paler, he reached the bottom of the stairs. The spectre lying chained to the four pillars still rattled in its throat.

A voice in the shadow said, "Approach!"

It was the sheriff addressing Gwynplaine. Gwynplaine took a step forward. "Closer," said the sheriff.

The justice of the quorum murmured in the ear of Gwynplaine so gravely that there was solemnity in the whisper: "You are before the sheriff of the county of Surrey."

Gwynplaine advanced towards the victim extended in the centre of the cell. The wapentake and the justice of the quorum remained where they were, allowing Gwynplaine to advance alone. When he reached the miserable object which he had hitherto seen only from a distance, but which was a living man, his fear increased to terror. The man who was chained there was quite naked, except for that hideously modest rag which might be called the vineleaf of punishment, the *suc-cingulum* of the Romans, and the *christipannus* of the Goths, which the old Gallic jargon converted into *cri-pagne*. Christ wore only that shred upon the cross.

The terror-stricken sufferer, whom Gwynplaine now saw distinctly, seemed a man about fifty or sixty years of age. He was bald. A few grizzly hairs bristled on his chin. His eyes were closed; his mouth open. Every tooth could be seen. His thin and bony face was like a death's-head. His arms and legs were fastened by chains to the four stone pillars in the shape of the letter X. He had on his breast and belly an iron plate, on which five or six large stones were laid. His rattle was at times a sigh, at times a roar.

The sheriff, still holding his bunch of roses, took from the table with the hand which was free his white wand, and standing up said, "Obedience to her Majesty." Then he replaced the wand upon the table. Then in words long-drawn as a knell, without a gesture, and immovable as the sufferer, the sheriff, raising his voice, said:—

"Man, who liest here bound in chains, listen for the last time to the voice of justice! You have been taken from your dungeon and brought to this jail. Legally summoned in the usual forms, *formaliis verbis pressus*; not regarding lectures and communications which have been made, and which will now be repeated, to you; inspired by a bad and perverse spirit of obstinacy, you have preserved silence, and refused to answer the judge. This is a detestable offence, which constitutes, among deeds punishable by cashlit, the crime and misdemeanour of overseness."

The serjeant of the coif on the right of the sheriff interrupted him, and said, with an indifference which was indescribably lugubrious in its effect: "*Overhernessa*. Laws of Alfred and of Godrun, chapter the sixth."

The sheriff resumed: "The law is respected by all except by scoundrels who infest the woods where the hinds bear young."

Like one clock striking after another, the serjeant said, "*Qui faciunt vastum in foresta ubi damæ solent founinare.*"

"He who refuses to answer the magistrate," said the sheriff, "is suspected of every vice. He is supposed capable of every evil."

The serjeant interposed: "*Prodigus, devorator, profusus, salax, ruffianus, ebriosus, luxuriosus, simulator, consumptor patrimonii, elluo, ambro, et gluto.*"

"Every vice," said the sheriff, "means every crime. He who confesses nothing confesses everything. He who holds his peace before the questions of the judge is in fact a liar and a parricide."

"*Mendax et parricida,*" said the serjeant.

The sheriff said: "Man, it is not permissible to protect one's self by silence. To pretend contumaciousness is a wound given to the law; it is like Diomedæ wounding a goddess. Taciturnity before a judge is one form of rebellion. Treason to justice is high treason. Nothing is more hateful or rash. He who resists interrogation hides the truth. The law has provided for this. For such cases, the English have always enjoyed the right of the foss, the fork, and chains."

"*Anglica Charta, year 1088,*" said the serjeant. Then with the same mechanical gravity, he added: "*Ferrum, et fossam, et furcas cum aliis libertatibus.*"

The sheriff continued: "Man! Inasmuch as you have not chosen to break silence, though of sound mind and having full knowledge in respect to the subject concerning which justice demands an answer, and inasmuch as you are diabolically refractory, you have necessarily been put to torture; and you have been, by the terms of the criminal statutes, tried by the '*Peine forte et dure.*' This is what has been done to you, for the law requires that I should fully inform you. You have

been brought to this dungeon; you have been stripped of your clothes; you have been laid on your back naked on the ground; your limbs have been stretched and tied to the four pillars of the law; a sheet of iron has been placed on your chest, and as many stones as you can bear have been heaped on your belly, 'and more,' says the law."

"Plusque," affirmed the serjeant.

The sheriff continued: "In this situation, and before prolonging the torture, a second summons to answer and to speak has been made to you by me, sheriff of the county of Surrey, and you have satanically kept silent, though under torture, chains, shackles, fetters, and irons."

"Attachiamenta legalia," said the serjeant.

"On your continued refusal and contumacy," said the sheriff, "it being right that the obstinacy of the law should equal the obstinacy of the criminal, the test has been continued according to the edicts and texts. The first day you were given nothing to eat or drink."

"Hoc est superjejunare," said the serjeant.

In the silence, the awful hiss of a man's breathing was distinctly audible from under the heap of stones.

The serjeant-at-law completed his quotation: "*Adde augmentum abstinentiæ ciborum diminutione. Consuetudo brittanica, art. 504.*"

The two men, the sheriff and the serjeant, alternated. Nothing could be more dreary than their imperturbable monotony. The mournful voice responded to the ominous voice; it might be said that the priest and the deacon of punishment were celebrating the high mass of the law.

The sheriff resumed: "On the first day you were given nothing to eat or drink. On the second day you were given food, but nothing to drink. Between

your teeth were thrust three mouthfuls of barley bread. On the third day they gave you drink, but nothing to eat. They poured into your mouth at three different times, and from three different glasses, a pint of water taken from the common sewer of the prison. The fourth day is come. It is to-day. Now, if you do not answer, you will be left here till you die. Justice wills it."

"Mors rei homagium est bonæ legi," promptly reiterated the serjeant.

"And when you feel yourself dying miserably," resumed the sheriff, "no one will attend you, even when the blood rushes from your throat, your chin, and your armpits, and from every pore, from your mouth to your loins."

"A throtabolla," said the serjeant, "et pabus et subhircis et a grugno usque ad crupponum."

The sheriff continued: "Man, listen to me, because the consequences deeply concern you. If you renounce your execrable silence, and confess, you will only be hanged, and you will have a right to the meldefeoh, which is a sum of money."

"Damnum confitens," said the serjeant, "habeat le meldefeoh. Leges Inæ, chapter the twentieth."

"Which sum," insisted the sheriff, "shall be paid in doitkins, suskins, and galihalpens, according to the provisions of Death Statute III. of Henry V., and you will have the right and enjoyment of *scortum ante mortem*, and then be hanged on the gibbet. Such are the advantages of confession. Does it please you to respond to justice?"

The sheriff ceased, and waited. The prisoner lay motionless.

The sheriff resumed: "Man, silence is a refuge in which there is more risk than safety. The obstinate man is damnable and vicious. He who is silent before

the authorities is a felon to the crown. Do not persist in this unfilial disobedience. Think of her Majesty. Do not oppose our gracious queen. When I speak to you, answer her; be a loyal subject."

The victim rattled in the throat.

The sheriff continued: "So, after seventy-two hours of the test, here we are come to the fourth day. Man, this is the decisive day. The fourth day has been fixed by the law for the confrontation."

"Quarta die, frontem ad frontem adduce," growled the serjeant.

"The wisdom of the law," continued the sheriff, "has chosen this last hour to hold what our ancestors called 'judgment in mortal cold,' seeing that it is the moment when men are believed on their *yes* or their *no*."

The serjeant on the right confirmed his words: "Judicium pro frodmortell, quod homines credendi sint per suum ya et per suum no. Charter of King Adelstan, volume the first, page one hundred and sixty-three."

There was a moment's pause; then the sheriff bent his stern face towards the prisoner. "Man, who art lying there on the ground—"

He paused. "Man," he cried, "do you hear me?"

The man did not move.

"In the name of the law," said the sheriff, "open your eyes."

The man's lids remained closed.

The sheriff turned to the doctor, who was standing on his left: "Doctor, make your diagnosis."

"Probe, da diagnosticum," said the serjeant.

The doctor stepped down with magisterial dignity, approached the man, leaned over him, put his ear close to the mouth of the sufferer, felt the pulse at the wrist, the armpit, and the thigh, then rose again.

"Well?" said the sheriff.

"He can still hear," said the doctor.

"Can he see?" inquired the sheriff.

The doctor answered, "He can see."

At a sign from the sheriff, the justice of the quorum and the wapentake advanced. The wapentake placed himself near the head of the patient. The justice of the quorum stood just behind Gwynplaine. The doctor retired a step behind the pillars.

Then the sheriff, raising the bunch of roses like a priest about to sprinkle holy water, called to the prisoner in a loud and solemn voice, —

"O wretched man, speak! The law supplicates before she exterminates you. You, who feign to be mute, remember how mute is the tomb. You, who appear deaf, remember that damnation is more deaf. Think of the death which is far worse than your present state. Repent: you are about to be left alone in this cell. Listen, you who are my likeness; for I too am a man! Listen, my brother, because I am a Christian! Listen, my son, because I am an old man! Look at me; for I am the master of your sufferings, and I am about to become terrible. The terrors of the law constitute the majesty of the judge. Believe that I myself tremble before myself. My own power alarms me. Do not drive me to extremities. I am filled with the holy power of chastisement. Feel, then, wretched man, a salutary and honest fear of justice, and obey me. The hour of confrontation is come, and you must answer. Do not harden yourself in resistance. Do not do that which will be irrevocable. Think that your end depends upon me. Half man, half corpse, listen! At least, let it not be your determination to expire here, exhausted for hours, days, and weeks by frightful agonies of hunger and foulness; under the weight of

those stones; alone in this cell, deserted, forgotten, annihilated; left as food for the rats and weasels, gnawed by creatures of darkness while the world outside comes and goes, buys and sells, and while carriages roll along in the streets above your head,—unless you would continue to draw painful breath without remission in the depths of despair, grinding your teeth, weeping, blaspheming, without a doctor to appease the anguish of your wounds, without a priest to offer a divine draught of water to your soul. Oh, if only that you may not feel the frightful froth of the sepulchre ooze slowly from your lips, I adjure and conjure you to hear me! Have compassion on yourself; do what is asked of you. Submit to the demands of justice. Open your eyes, and see if you recognize this man.”

The prisoner neither turned his head nor lifted his eyelids. The sheriff cast a glance first at the justice of the quorum and then at the wapentake. The justice of the quorum, removing Gwynplaine’s hat and mantle, put his hands on his shoulders and placed him in the light beside the chained man. The face of Gwynplaine stood out in bold relief from the surrounding shadow. At the same time the wapentake bent down, took the man’s temples between his hands, turned the inert head towards Gwynplaine, and with his thumbs and his first fingers lifted the closed eyelids.

The prisoner saw Gwynplaine. Then, raising his head voluntarily, and opening his eyes wide, he looked at him. He quivered as much as a man can quiver with a mountain on his breast, and then cried out,—

“ ’Tis he! Yes, ’t is he!” and he burst into a horrible laugh. “ ’Tis he!” he repeated. Then his head fell back on the ground, and he closed his eyes again.

“ Registrar, take that down,” said the justice.

Gwynplaine, though terrified, had up to that moment

preserved a calm exterior. The cry of the prisoner, " 'Tis he ! " overwhelmed him completely. The words, " Registrar, take that down ! " froze him with horror. It seemed to him that a scoundrel had dragged him to his fate without his being able to guess why, and that the man's unintelligible confession was closing round him like the clasp of an iron collar. He fancied himself side by side with him in the posts of the same pillory. Gwynplaine lost his footing in his terror, and protested. He began to stammer incoherent words in the deep distress of an innocent man, and quivering, terrified, uttered the first frantic protests that occurred to him :

" It is not true ! It was not me ! I do not know this man. He cannot know me, since I do not know him. I have my part to play this evening. What do you want of me ? I demand my liberty. Nor is that all. Why have I been brought into this dungeon ? Are there no longer any laws in the land ? You may as well admit at once that there are no laws. My Lord Judge, I repeat that I am not the man. I am innocent of any crime ; I know I am. I want to go away. This is not justice. There is nothing between this man and me. You can find out. My life is no secret. They came and arrested me like a thief. Why did they come like that ? How could I know the man ? I am a travelling mountebank, who plays farces at fairs and markets. I am the Laughing Man. Plenty of people have been to see me. We are staying now in the Tarrinzeau Fields. I have been earning an honest livelihood these fifteen years. I am five-and-twenty. I lodge at the Tadcaster Inn. I am called Gwynplaine. My lord, let me out. You should not take advantage of the low estate of the unfortunate. Have compassion on a man who has done no harm, who is without protection, and without defence. You have before you only a poor mountebank. "

"I have before me," said the sheriff, "Lord Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Sicily, and a peer of England." And rising, and offering his chair to Gwynplaine, the sheriff added, "My lord, will your lordship deign to seat yourself?"

BOOK V.

THE SEA AND FATE ARE MOVED BY THE SAME BREATH.



CHAPTER I.

THE DURABILITY OF FRAGILE THINGS.

DESTINY sometimes proffers us a glass of madness to drink. A hand is thrust out of the mist, and suddenly hands us the mysterious cup containing latent intoxication.

Gwynplaine did not understand. He looked behind him to see who it was that had been thus addressed. A sound may be too sharp to be perceptible to the ear; an emotion too acute conveys no meaning to the mind. There is a limit to comprehension as well as to hearing.

The wapentake and the justice of the quorum approached Gwynplaine, and took him by the arms. He felt himself placed in the chair which the sheriff had just vacated. He allowed this to be done, without demanding any explanation. When Gwynplaine was seated, the justice of the quorum and the wapentake retired a few steps, and stood upright and motionless, behind his chair. Then the sheriff placed his bunch of roses on the stone table, put on the spectacles which the secretary gave him, drew from the bundles of papers which covered the table a sheet of parchment, yellow,

green, torn, and jagged in many places, which seemed to have been folded in very small folds. One side of the sheet was covered with writing; and standing under the light of the lamp, the sheriff held the paper close to his eyes, and in his most solemn tone read as follows :

“ In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

“ On this, the twenty-ninth of January, one thousand six hundred and ninetieth year of our Lord, there was wickedly deserted on the desert coast of Portland, with the intention of allowing him to perish of hunger, of cold, and of solitude, a child ten years old. This child was sold at the age of two years, by order of his most gracious Majesty, King James the Second.

“ This child was Lord Fermain Clancharlie, the only legitimate son of Lord Linnaeus Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Sicily, a Peer of England, and of Ann Bradshaw, his wife, both deceased. This child was the inheritor of the estates and titles of his father. For this reason he was sold, mutilated, disfigured, and put out of the way by desire of his most gracious Majesty.

“ That child was brought up, and trained to be a mountebank at markets and fairs. He was sold at the age of two, after the death of the peer, his father, and ten pounds sterling were given to the king as his purchase-money, as well as for divers concessions, tolerations, and immunities, etc.

“ Lord Fermain Clancharlie, at the age of two years, was bought by me, the undersigned, who write these lines, and mutilated and disfigured by a Fleming of Flanders, called Hardquanonne, who alone is acquainted with the secrets and modes of treatment of Doctor Conquest. The child was intended by us to be a laughing mask, — *masca ridens*.

“ With this intention Hardquanonne performed on him the operation, *Bucca fissa usque ad aures*, which stamps an everlasting laugh upon the face. The child, by means known only to Hardquanonne, was put to sleep and made insensible during its performance, knowing nothing of the operation which he underwent. He does not know that he is Lord

Clancharlie. He answers to the name of Gwynplaine. This fact is the result of his youth, and the slight powers of memory he could have had when he was bought and sold, being then barely two years of age.

“Hardquanonne is the only person who knows how to perform the operation *Bucca fissa*, and the said child is the only living subject upon which it has been attempted. The operation is so unique and singular that though after long years this child will be an old man instead of a child, and his black locks will have turned white, he would be immediately recognized by Hardquanonne.

“At the time of this writing, Hardquanonne, who has perfect knowledge of all the facts, and participated as principal therein, is detained in the prisons of his Highness the Prince of Orange, commonly called King William III. Hardquanonne was apprehended and seized on the charge of being one of a band of Comprachicos or Cheylas. He is imprisoned in the jail at Chatham.

“It was in Switzerland, near the Lake of Geneva, between Lausanne and Vevay, in the very house in which his father and mother died, that this child was, in compliance with the orders of the king, sold and given up by the last servant of the deceased Lord Linnæus, which servant died soon after his master, so this secret is now unknown to any one on earth, excepting Hardquanonne, who is in the dungeon of Chatham, and ourselves, now about to perish.

“We, the undersigned, brought up and kept, for eight years, for professional purposes, the little lord purchased by us of the king. Now, fleeing from England to escape Hardquanonne’s fate, our fear of the penal indictments, prohibitions, and fulminations of Parliament induced us to desert, at night-fall, on the coast of Portland, the said child Gwynplaine, who is really Lord Fermain Clancharlie.

“Now, we have sworn secrecy to the king, but not to God. To-night, at sea, overtaken by a violent tempest by the will of Providence, full of despair and distress, kneeling before Him who could save our lives, and may, perhaps, be willing to save our souls, having nothing more to hope from men, but

everything to fear from God, having for our only anchor and resource repentance of our bad actions, resigned to death, and content, if divine justice be satisfied, humble, penitent, and beating our breasts, we make this confession, and confide and deliver it to the furious ocean to use as it may, according to the will of God. And may the Holy Virgin aid us. *Amen.* We herewith append our signatures.”

The sheriff here paused in his reading, to remark, “Here are the signatures. All in different handwritings.” Then resumed:—

“Doctor Gerhadus Geestemunde. Asuncion. [A cross, and at the side of it] Barbara Fermoy, from Tyrriif Island, in the Hebrides. Gaizdorra, Captal. Giangirate. Jacques Quartourze, alias the Narbonnais. Luc-Pierre Capgaroupe, from the galleys of Mahon.”

The sheriff, after a short pause, continued: “Here is a note written in the same hand as the text and the first signature.” And he read:—

“Of the three men comprising the crew, the skipper having been swept off by a wave, there remain but two, who sign here. Galdeazun. Ave Maria, thief.”

The sheriff, interspersing his reading with his own remarks continued: “At the bottom of the sheet is written,—

“‘At sea, on board of the “Matutina,” Biscay hooker, from the Gulf de Pasages.’

“This sheet,” added the sheriff, “is a legal document, bearing the mark of King James the Second. On the margin of the document and in the same handwriting, there is this note:—

“‘The present declaration is written by us on the back of the royal order, which was given us as our receipt when we bought the child. Turn the leaf and the order will be seen.’”

The sheriff turned the parchment, and raised it in his right hand, to expose it to the light. A blank page was seen,—if the word blank can be applied to a thing so mouldy,—and in the middle of the page three words were written, two Latin words, *Jussu regis*, and a signature, *Jefferies*.

"*Jussu regis, Jefferies*," said the sheriff, passing from a grave voice to a clear one.

Gwynplaine felt like a man upon whose head a tile has fallen from the palace of dreams. He began to speak, like one who speaks unconsciously:—

"Gerhadus; yes, that was the doctor,—an old, sad-looking man. I was afraid of him. Gaizdorra, Captal, that means chief. There were women,—Asuncion, and the other. And then the Provençal; his name was Capgaroupe. He used to drink out of a flat bottle on which there was a name woven in red."

"Behold it," said the sheriff. He placed on the table something which the secretary had just taken out of the bag. It was a gourd covered with wicker. This bottle had evidently seen service, and had sojourned long in the water. Shells and sea-weed still adhered to it. It was incrustated and damascened over with the rust of ocean. There was a ring of tar round its neck, showing that it had been hermetically sealed. It was unsealed and open now. They had, however, replaced in the flask a sort of bung made of tarred oakum, which had been used to cork it.

"It was in this bottle," said the sheriff, "that the men about to perish placed the confession which I have just read. This message addressed to justice has been faithfully delivered by the sea."

The sheriff in even more impressive tones continued: "In the same way that Harrow Hill produces excellent wheat, which is converted into fine flour for the royal

table, so the sea renders every service in its power to England; and when a nobleman is lost, finds and restores him."

Then he resumed: "On this flask, as you say, there is a name woven in red."

He raised his voice, turning to the motionless prisoner: "Your name, malefactor, is here. Such are the hidden channels by which truth, swallowed up in the gulf of human actions, floats to the surface."

The sheriff took the gourd, and turned to the light one of its sides, which had, doubtless, been cleaned for purposes of justice. Between the interstices of wicker was a narrow line of red reed, darkened here and there by the action of water and of time. The reed, notwithstanding some breakages, traced distinctly in the wicker-work these twelve letters: *Hardquanonne*. Then the sheriff, resuming that monotonous tone of voice which resembles nothing else, and which may be termed a judicial tone, turned towards the sufferer:—

"Hardquanonne! when this bottle, on which your name is inscribed was for the first time shown, exhibited, and presented to you by us, the sheriff, you at once, and willingly, identified it as your property. Afterwards the parchment which had been folded and enclosed within it, being read to you, you would say no more; and in the hope, doubtless, that the lost child would never be recovered, and that you would escape punishment, you refused to answer all questions. As the result of your refusal, you have had applied to you the *peine forte et dure*; and a second reading of the said parchment, on which the declaration and confession of your accomplices is written, was made to you, but in vain. This is the fourth day, and that legally set apart for the confrontation; and he who was deserted on the twenty-ninth of January, in the year one thousand six

hundred and ninety, having been brought into your presence, your fiendish hope has vanished — you have broken silence, and recognized your victim."

The prisoner opened his eyes, lifted his head, and, with a voice strangely resonant of agony, but which had still an indescribable calmness mingled with its hoarseness, uttered in excruciating accents from beneath the mass of stones, words, to pronounce each of which he had to lift that which was like the slab of a tomb placed upon him. He spoke:—

"I swore to keep the secret. I have kept it as long as I could. Men of dark lives are faithful, and even hell has its honour. Now silence is useless. So be it! For this reason I speak. Well—yes; 't is he! We did it between us, — the king and I! The king, by his will; I, by my art!" and looking at Gwynplaine: "Now laugh forever!" and he himself began to laugh.

A second laugh, wilder yet than the first, might have been taken for a sob. The laugh ceased, and the man lay back. His eyelids closed.

The sheriff, who had allowed the prisoner to speak, resumed: "All of which is placed on record."

He gave the secretary time to write, and then said: "Hardquanonne, by the terms of the law, after confrontation followed by identification, after the third reading of the declarations of your accomplices, since confirmed by your recognition and confession, and after your renewed avowal, you are about to be relieved from these irons, and placed at the good pleasure of her Majesty to be hung as a *plagiary*."

"*Plagiary*," said the serjeant of the coif; "that is to say, a buyer and seller of children. Law of the Visigoths, seventh book, third section, paragraph *Usurpaverit*; and Salic law, section the forty-first, paragraph the second; and law of the Frisons, section the twenty-

first, *De Plagio*; and Alexander Nequam says: “ ‘ Qui pueros vendis, plagiarium est tibi nomen.’ ”

The sheriff placed the parchment on the table, laid down his spectacles, took up the nosegay, and said: “ End of *la peine forte et dure*. Hardquanonne, thank her Majesty.”

The justice of the quorum motioned to the man dressed in leather. This man, who was the executioner's assistant (“groom of the gibbet,” the old charters call him), went to the prisoner, removed the stones, one by one, from his chest, and lifted the plate of iron up, exposing the wretch's crushed sides. Then he freed his wrists and ankle-bones from the four chains that fastened him to the pillars.

The prisoner, released alike from stones and chains, lay flat on the ground, his eyes closed, his arms and legs apart, like a crucified man taken down from a cross.

“ Hardquanonne,” said the sheriff, “ arise ! ”

The prisoner did not move.

The groom of the gibbet took up a hand and let it go; the hand fell back. The other hand, being raised, fell back likewise. The groom of the gibbet seized one foot and then the other, and the heels fell back on the ground. The fingers remained inert, and the toes motionless. The naked feet of an extended corpse seem, as it were, to bristle.

The doctor approached, and drawing from the pocket of his robe a small steel mirror, put it to the open mouth of Hardquanonne. Then with his fingers, he lifted the eyelids. They did not close again. The glassy eyeballs remained fixed. The doctor rose up and said, “ He is dead ; ” and he added, “ He laughed ; that killed him.”

“ 'T is of little consequence,” said the sheriff. “ After confession, life or death is a mere formality.” Then, in-

dicating Hardquanonne by a gesture with the nosegay of roses, the sheriff gave this order to the wapentake: "A corpse to be carried away to-night."

The wapentake acquiesced by a nod.

The sheriff added, "The cemetery of the jail is opposite."

The wapentake nodded again.

The sheriff, holding in his left hand the nosegay and in his right the white wand, placed himself opposite Gwynplaine, who was still seated, and made him a low bow; then assuming another solemn attitude he turned his head over his shoulder, and looking Gwynplaine in the face, said, —

"To you here present, we, Philip Denzill Parsons, knight, sheriff of the county of Surrey, assisted by Aubrey Dominick, Esq., our clerk and registrar, and by our usual officers, duly provided by the direct and special commands of her Majesty, in virtue of our commission, and the rights and duties of our charge, and with authority from the Lord Chancellor of England, the affidavits having been drawn up and recorded, regard being had to the documents communicated by the Admiralty, after verification of attestations and signatures, after declarations read and heard, after confrontation made, all the statements and legal information having been completed, exhausted, and brought to a good and just issue, we signify and declare to you, in order that justice may be done, that you are Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, Marquis de Corleone in Sicily, and a Peer of England; and God keep your lordship."

The sheriff bowed to Gwynplaine. The serjeant on the right, the doctor, the justice of the quorum, the wapentake, the secretary, all the attendants except the executioner, repeated the salutation still more respectfully, and bowed to the ground before Gwynplaine.

"Ah!" said Gwynplaine; "awake me!" and he stood up, pale as death.

"I come to awake you indeed," said a voice which had not been heard before.

A man came out from behind the pillars. As no one had entered the cell since the iron door had admitted the *cortège* of police, it was clear that this man had been there in the shadow before Gwynplaine had entered; that he had an acknowledged right of attendance, and had been present by appointment. The man was fat and puffy, and wore a court wig and a travelling cloak. He was old rather than young, and very precise in his speech. He saluted Gwynplaine with ease and respect, — with the ease of a gentleman-in-waiting, not with the awkwardness of a judge.

"Yes," he said; "I have come to awaken you. For twenty-five years you have slept; you have been dreaming. It is time to wake. You believe yourself to be Gwynplaine; you are Clancharlie. You believe yourself to be one of the people; you belong to the peerage. You believe yourself to be of the lowest rank; you are of the highest. You believe yourself a player; you are a senator. You believe yourself poor; you are wealthy. You believe yourself to be of no account; you are an important personage. Awake, my lord!"

Gwynplaine, in a low voice, in which a tremour of fear was apparent, murmured, "What does it all mean?"

"It means, my lord," said the fat man, "that I am called Barkilphedro; that I am an officer of the Admiralty; that this waif, Hardquanonne's flask, was found on the beach, and was brought to me to be unsealed, according to the duty and prerogatives of my office; that I opened it in the presence of two sworn officials of the Jetsam Office, both members of parliament, — William Blathwait, for the city of Bath, and Thomas Jervois,

for Southampton; that the two jurors deciphered and attested to the contents of the flask, and signed the necessary affidavit conjointly with me; that I made my report to her Majesty, and by order of the queen all necessary and legal formalities were carried out with all the discretion necessary in a matter so delicate; that the last form, the confrontation, has just been carried out; that you have £40,000 a year; that you are a peer of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, a legislator and a judge, — a supreme judge, a sovereign legislator, dressed in purple and ermine, equal to princes, like unto emperors; that you have on your brow the coronet of a peer, and that you are about to wed a duchess, the daughter of a king."

Under this transfiguration, overwhelming him like a series of thunderbolts, Gwynplaine fainted.

CHAPTER II.

THE WAIF KNOWS ITS OWN COURSE.

ALL that had occurred was due to the circumstance of a soldier having found a bottle on the beach. We will relate the facts. In all facts there are wheels within wheels.

One day one of the four gunners composing the garrison of Calshor Castle picked up on the sand at low water a wicker covered flask which had been cast up by the tide. This flask, covered with mould, was corked by a tarred bung. The soldier carried the waif to the colonel of the castle, and the colonel sent it to the High Admiral of England. The Admiral meant the Admiralty; with waifs, the Admiralty meant Barkilphedro. Barkilphedro having uncorked and emptied the bottle, carried it to the queen. The queen immediately took the matter into consideration.

Two weighty counsellors were instructed and consulted; namely the Lord Chancellor, who is by law the guardian of the king's conscience, and the Lord Marshal, who is referee in Heraldry and in the pedigrees of the nobility. Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, a Catholic peer, who is hereditary Earl Marshal of England, had sent word by his deputy Earl Marshal, Henry Howard, Earl Bindon, that he would agree with the Lord Chancellor. The Lord Chancellor was William Cowper. We must not confound this chancellor with his namesake and contemporary William Cowper, the

anatomist and commentator on Bidloo, who published a treatise on muscles, in England, at the very time that Etienne Abeille published a treatise on bones, in France. A surgeon is a very different thing from a lord. Lord William Cowper is celebrated for having, with reference to the affair of Talbot Yelverton, Viscount Longueville, propounded this opinion: That in the English constitution, the restoration of a peer is more important than the restoration of a king. The flask found at Calshor had excited and interested him greatly.

The author of a maxim delights in opportunities to which it may be applied. Here was a case of the restoration of a peer. Search was made. Gwynplaine was soon found by means of the inscription over his door. Neither was Hardquanonne dead. A prison rots a man, but preserves him,—if to keep is to preserve. People placed in bastiles were rarely removed. Their prisons were changed as rarely as people's graves were changed. Hardquanonne was still in the prison at Chatham. They had only to put their hands on him. He was transferred from Chatham to London. In the mean time, information was sought in Switzerland. The facts were found to be correct. They obtained from the local archives at Vevay and at Lausanne the certificate of Lord Linnæus' marriage in exile, the certificate of his child's birth, the certificate of the decease of the father and mother; and they had duplicates, duly authenticated, made to answer all necessary requirements.

All this was done with the utmost secrecy, as well as with what is called royal promptitude, and that mole-like silence recommended and practised by Bacon, and later on made the law by Blackstone, in affairs connected with the chancellorship and the State, and in matters termed parliamentary. The *jussu regis* and the signature *Jefferies* were authenticated. To those who have studied patho-

logically the cases of caprice called "our good will and pleasure," this *jussu regis* is very simple. Why should James II., whose reputation required the concealment of such acts, have allowed that to be written which so endangered the success of his plans? The answer is, cynicism, haughty indifference. Oh, you fancy that effrontery is confined to abandoned women? The *raison d'état* is equally bold. *Et se cupit ante videri*. To commit a crime and emblazon it is the sum total of history. The king tattooes himself like the convict. Often when it would be to a man's greatest advantage to escape from the hands of the police or the records of history, he would seem to regret the escape, so great is the love of notoriety. Look at my arm. Observe the design. *I* am Lacenaire! See, a temple of love and a burning heart pierced through with an arrow! *Jussu regis*. It is I, James the Second. A man commits a bad action, and places his mark upon it. To fill up the measure of crime by effrontery, to denounce himself, to cling to his misdeeds, is the insolent bravado of the criminal. Christina seized Monaldeschi, had him confessed and assassinated, and said, "I am the Queen of Sweden, in the palace of the King of France."

There is the tyrant who conceals himself, like Tiberius; and the tyrant who parades himself, like Philip II. One has the attributes of the scorpion, the other those of the leopard. James II. belonged to this latter variety. He had, we know, a gay and open countenance, differing so far from Philip. Philip was sullen; James jovial. Both were equally ferocious. James II. was an easy-minded tiger; like Philip II., his crimes lay lightly upon his conscience. He was a monster by the grace of God; therefore he had nothing to dissimulate nor to extenuate, and his assassinations were by divine right. He, too, would not have minded leaving behind him those

archives of Simancas, with all his misdeeds dated, classified, labelled, and put in order, each in its compartment, like poisons in a chemist's laboratory. To set the sign-manual to crimes is right royal.

Every deed done is a draft drawn on the great invisible pay-master. A bill had just come due with the ominous indorsement, *Jussu regis*.

Queen Anne, no woman in one respect, inasmuch as she could keep a secret, demanded a confidential report on so grave a matter from the Lord Chancellor, — one of the kind specified as "report to the royal ear." Reports of this kind have been common in all monarchies. At Vienna there was "a counsellor of the ear," — an aulic dignitary. It was an ancient Carlovingian office, — the *auricularius* of the old palatine deeds; he who whispers to the emperor.

William, Baron Cowper, Chancellor of England, whom the queen believed in because he was as short-sighted as herself, or even more so, had committed to writing a memorandum commencing thus: "Two birds were subject to Solomon, — a lapwing, the Hudbud, who could speak all languages, and an eagle, the Simourganka, who covered with the shadow of his wings a caravan of twenty thousand men. Thus, under another form, Providence," etc. The Lord Chancellor proved the fact that the heir to a peerage had been carried off, mutilated, and then restored. He did not blame James II., who was, after all, the queen's father. He even went so far as to justify him. First, there are ancient monarchial maxims, — *E senioratu eripimus. In roturagio cadat*. Secondly, there is a royal right of mutilation. Chamberlayne asserts this fact. "*Corpora et bona nostrorum subjectorum nostra sunt*," said James I., of glorious and learned memory. The eyes of dukes of the blood royal have been plucked out for the good of the kingdom.

Certain princes, too near to the throne, have been conveniently stifled between mattresses, the cause of death being given out as apoplexy. Now, to stifle is worse than to mutilate. The King of Tunis tore out the eyes of his father, Muley Assem, and his ambassadors have been no less favourably received by the emperor. Hence the king may order the suppression of a limb like the suppression of a State, etc. It is legal. But one law does not destroy another. "If a drowned man is cast up by the water, and is not dead, it is an act of God readjusting one of the king. If the heir be found, let the coronet be given back to him. This was done for Lord Alla, King of Northumberland, who was also a mountebank. This should be done for Gwynplaine, who was also a king, inasmuch as he was a peer. The lowness of the occupation which he has been obliged to follow, under constraint of superior power, does not tarnish the escutcheon,—witness the case of Abdolmumen, who was a king, although he had been a gardener; that of Joseph, who was a saint, although he had been a carpenter; that of Apollo, who was a god, although he had been a shepherd."

In short, the learned chancellor concluded by advising the re-instatement in all his estates and dignities of Lord Fermain Clancharlie, miscalled Gwynplaine, on the sole condition that he should be confronted with the criminal Hardquanonne, and identified by the same. And on this point the chancellor, as constitutional keeper of the royal conscience, based the royal decision. The Lord Chancellor added in a postscript that if Hardquanonne refused to answer, he should be subjected to the *peine forte et dure*, until the period called the *frodmortell*, according to the statute of King Athelstane, which orders the confrontation to take place on the fourth day. In this there is a certain inconvenience, for if the pris-

oner dies on the second or third day the confrontation becomes difficult; still, the law must be obeyed. The inconvenience of the law makes part and parcel of it. In the mind of the Lord Chancellor, however, the recognition of Gwynplaine by Hardquanonne was indubitable.

Anne, having been made aware of the deformity of Gwynplaine, and not wishing to wrong her sister, on whom the estates of Clancharlie had been bestowed, graciously decided that the Duchess Josiana should be espoused by the new lord, — that is to say, by Gwynplaine. The re-instatement of Lord Fermain Clancharlie was, moreover, a very simple affair, the heir being legitimate, and in the direct line.

In cases of doubtful descent and of peerages in abeyance claimed by collaterals, the House of Lords must be consulted. This (to go no further back) was done in 1782, in the case of the barony of Sydney, claimed by Elizabeth Perry; in 1798, in the case of the barony of Beaumont, claimed by Thomas Stapleton; in 1803 in the case of the barony of Chandos, claimed by the Reverend Tymewell Brydges; in 1813, in the case of the earldom of Banbury, claimed by General Knollys, etc. But the present was not a similar case. Here there was no pretense for litigation; the legitimacy was undoubted; the right clear and certain. There was no point to submit to the House, and the queen, supported by the Lord Chancellor, had power to recognize and admit the new peer.

Barkilphedro managed everything. The affair, thanks to him, was kept so close, the secret was so hermetically sealed, that neither Josiana nor Lord David caught sight of the fearful abyss which was being dug under them. It was easy to deceive Josiana, intrenched as she was behind a rampart of pride. She was self-isolated. As to Lord David, they sent him off to the coast of Flanders.

He was about to lose his peerage, but had no suspicion of it. One circumstance is noteworthy. It happened that about six leagues from the anchorage of the naval station commanded by Lord David, a captain called Halyburton broke through the French fleet. The Earl of Pembroke, President of the Council, proposed that this Captain Halyburton should be made vice-admiral. Anne struck out Halyburton's name, and put Lord David Dirry-Moir's in its place, that he might, when no longer a peer, have the satisfaction of being a vice-admiral.

Anne was well pleased. A hideous husband for her sister, and a fine step for Lord David. Malice and kindness combined. Her Majesty was going to enjoy a comedy. Besides, she argued to herself that she was repairing an abuse of power committed by her august father; she was re-instating a member of the peerage. She was acting like a great queen; she was protecting innocence according to the will of God, and furthering the holy and mysterious ways of Providence, etc. It is very sweet to do a good deed that injures those whom we do not like. To know that the future husband of her sister was deformed, sufficed the queen. In what manner Gwynplaine was deformed, and by what kind of ugliness, Barkilphedro had not communicated to the queen, and Anne had not deigned to inquire. She was proudly and royally disdainful. Besides, what could it matter? The House of Lords could not but be grateful; the Lord Chancellor, its oracle, had approved. To restore a peer is to restore the peerage. Royalty on this occasion had shown itself a good and scrupulous guardian of the privileges of the peerage. Whatever the face of the new lord might be, a face cannot be urged as an objection to a right. Anne said all this to herself, or something like it, and went straight on, her object being at once grand, woman-like, and regal, — namely, to give

herself a pleasure. The queen was then at Windsor, a circumstance which placed a certain distance between the intrigues of the court and the public. Only such persons as were absolutely necessary to the plan were in the secret of what was taking place.

As for Barkilphedro, he was joyful, a circumstance which gave a specially lugubrious expression to his face. If there be one thing in the world which can be more hideous than another, 'tis joy. He had had the delight of being the first to taste the contents of Hardquanonne's flask. He seemed but little surprised, for astonishment is the attribute of a little mind. Besides, was it not all due to him, who had waited so long on duty at the gate of chance? Knowing how to wait, he had fairly won his reward. This *nil admirari* was not genuine, however. In his secret heart we must admit that he was very much astonished. Any one who could have lifted the mask with which he covered his inmost heart even before God, would have discovered that at that very time Barkilphedro had begun to feel convinced that it would be impossible — even to him, the intimate and most infinitesimal enemy of Josiana — to find a vulnerable place in her armour. Hence an access of savage animosity lurked in his mind. He had reached the paroxysm which is called discouragement. He was all the more furious, because despairing. To gnaw one's chain, — how tragic and appropriate the expression! A villain gnawing at his own powerlessness!

Barkilphedro was perhaps just on the point of renouncing, not his desire to do evil to Josiana, but his hope of doing it; not the rage, but the effort. But how degrading it is to be thus baffled! To keep hate henceforth, in a case, like a dagger in a museum! How bitter the humiliation. All at once — chance, immense and universal, loves to bring such coincidences about — the flask

of Hardquanonne came, driven from wave to wave, into Barkilphedro's hands. There is in the unknown an indescribable fealty which seems to be at the beck and call of evil. Barkilphedro, assisted by two chance witnesses, disinterested officials of the Admiralty, uncorked the flask, found the parchment, unfolded, read it. What words can express his fiendish delight!

It is strange to think that the sea, the wind, space, the ebb and flow of the tide, storms, calms, breezes, should have taken so much trouble to bestow happiness on a scoundrel. That co-operation had continued for fifteen years. Mysterious efforts! For fifteen years the ocean had never for an instant ceased from its labours. The waves transmitted from one to another the floating bottle. The shelving rocks had shunned the brittle glass; no crack had yawned in the flask, no friction had displaced the cork; the sea-weed had not rotted the osier, the shells had not eaten out the word "Hardquanonne;" the water had not penetrated into the waif, the mould had not rotted the parchment, the wet had not effaced the writing. What trouble the mighty deep must have taken! Thus that which Gerhadus had flung into darkness, darkness had brought back to Barkilphedro. The message sent to God had reached the devil. Space had committed a breach of confidence, and the lurking sarcasm which mingles with events had so arranged that it had complicated the triumph of the lost child's becoming Lord Clancharlie with a venomous victory; in doing a good deed, it had mischievously placed justice at the service of iniquity. To save the victim of James II. was to give a prey to Barkilphedro; to re-instate Gwynplaine was to crush Josiana. Barkilphedro had succeeded; and it was for this that for so many years the waves, the surge, the squalls had buffeted, shaken, thrown, pushed, tormented, and respected this bubble

of glass, which bore within it so many commingled fates. It was for this that there had been a cordial co-operation between the winds, the tides, and the tempests: a vast agitation of all elements for the pleasure of a scoundrel; the infinite co-operating with an earth-worm! Destiny is subject to such grim caprices.

Barkilphedro was struck by a flash of Titanic pride. He said to himself that it had all been done to fulfil his intentions. He felt that he was the object and the instrument. But he was wrong. Let us clear the character of chance.

Such was not the real meaning of the remarkable circumstance by which the hatred of Barkilphedro was to profit. Ocean had made itself father and mother to an orphan, had sent the hurricane against his executioners, had wrecked the vessel which had repulsed the child, had swallowed up the clasped hands of the storm-beaten sailors, refusing to listen to their supplications and accepting only their repentance. The tempest had received a sacred deposit from the hands of death. The strong vessel containing the crime was replaced by the fragile phial containing the reparation. The sea changed its character, and, like a panther turning nurse, began to rock the cradle, not of the child, but of his destiny, while he grew up ignorant of all that the depths of ocean were doing for him. The waves to which this flask had been flung watching over the past which contained a future; the whirlwind breathing kindly upon it; the currents directing the frail waif across the fathomless wastes of ocean; the caution exercised by seaweed; the swells, the rocks, the vast froth of the abyss, taking under their protection an innocent child; the wave imperturbable as a conscience, chaos re-establishing order, the world-wide shadows ending in radiance, darkness employed to bring the star of truth to light,

the exile consoled in his tomb, the heir given back to his inheritance, the crime of the king repaired, divine premeditation obeyed; the little, the weak, the deserted child with infinity for a guardian, — all this Barkilphedro might have seen in the event over which he exulted. This is what he did not see. He did not believe that all this had been done for Gwynplaine. He fancied that it had been done for Barkilphedro, and that he was well worth the trouble. Thus it is ever with Satan.

Moreover, ere we feel astonished that a waif so fragile should have floated for fifteen years undamaged, we should seek to understand the tender care of the ocean. Fifteen years is nothing. On the 4th of October, 1867, on the coast of Morbihan, between the Isle de Groix, the extremity of the peninsula de Gavres, and the Rocher des Errants, the fishermen of Port Louis found a Roman amphora of the fourth century, covered with arabesques by the incrustations of the sea. That amphora had been floating fifteen hundred years!

Whatever appearance of indifference Barkilphedro tried to exhibit, his wonder had equalled his delight. Everything he could desire was there under his hand. The fragments of the event which was to satisfy his hate were spread out within his reach. He had nothing to do but to pick them up and fit them together, — a work which it was a pleasure to execute. He was the artificer.

Gwynplaine! He knew the name, — *Masca ridens*. Like every one else, he had been to see the Laughing Man. He had read the sign nailed up against the Tadcaster Inn, as one reads a play-bill that attracts a crowd. He had noted it. He remembered its most minute details; and, in any case, it was easy to compare them with the original. As if in answer to the electrical summons which resounded in his memory, this notice ranged it-

self side by side with the confession signed by the shipwrecked crew, like an answer following a question, like the solution following an enigma; and the lines, "Here may be seen Gwynplaine, deserted at the age of ten, on the 29th of January, 1690, on the coast at Portland," — suddenly appeared before his eyes in all the splendour of an apocalypse. His vision was the sight of *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*, outside a booth.

A stately edifice had crumbled into dust. The lost child was found. There was a Lord Clancharlie. David Dirry-Moir was nobody. Peerage, riches, power, rank, — all these things deserted Lord David; all the castles, parks, forests, town houses, palaces, domains, Josiana included, belonged to Gwynplaine now. And what a climax for Josiana! What had she before her? Illustrious and haughty, — a strolling player; beautiful, — a monster. Who could have hoped for this? The truth was, that the joy of Barkilphedro had become enthusiastic. The most hateful combinations are surpassed by the infernal munificence of the unforeseen. When reality chooses, it works masterpieces. Barkilphedro found that all his dreams had been nonsense; the reality was infinitely better.

The change he was about to work would not have seemed less desirable had it been detrimental to him. Insects exist which are so savagely disinterested that they sting, knowing that to sting is to die. Barkilphedro resembled such vermin. But this time he had not the merit of being disinterested. Lord David Dirry-Moir owed him nothing, and Lord Fermain Clancharlie would owe him everything. From being a *protégé*, Barkilphedro was about to become a protector. Protector of whom? Of a Peer of England. He was going to have a lord of his own, and a lord who would be his creature. Barkilphedro counted on giving him his first

impressions. His peer would be the morganatic brother-in-law of the queen. His ugliness would please the queen in the same proportion as it displeased Josiana. Advancing by means of this potent influence and by the assumption of a grave and modest air, Barkilphedro might succeed in becoming quite an important personage. He had always been destined for the church. He had a vague longing to be a bishop.

Meanwhile Barkilphedro was happy. What a great success was his! and what a deal of useful work chance had accomplished for him! His vengeance—for he called it his vengeance—had been softly brought to him by the waves. He had not lain in ambush in vain. He was the rock, Josiana was the waif; Josiana was about to be dashed against Barkilphedro, to his intense villainous ecstasy. He was an adept in the art of suggestion,—that is, in making in the minds of others a little incision into which you put an idea of your own. Holding himself aloof, and without appearing to mix himself up in the matter, it was he who had arranged that Josiana should go to the Green Box and see Gwynplaine. It could do no harm. The appearance of the mountebank, in his low estate, would be a good ingredient in the combination. Later on, it would impart a piquant flavour to it. He had carefully prepared everything beforehand. What he most desired was something unspeakably abrupt. The work in which he was engaged could only be described in these strange words, the construction of a thunderbolt.

All preliminaries being completed, Barkilphedro had watched till all the necessary legal formalities had been accomplished. The secret had not oozed out, silence being an element of law. The confrontation of Hardquanonne with Gwynplaine had taken place. Barkilphedro had been present. We have seen the result.

The same day a post-chaise belonging to the royal household was suddenly sent by her Majesty to fetch Lady Josiana from London to Windsor, where the queen was residing. Josiana, for reasons of her own, would have been very glad to disobey, or at least to defer obedience, and postpone her departure until the next day; but court life does not allow of these objections. She was obliged to set out at once, and to leave Hunkerville House, her residence in London, for Corleone Lodge, her residence at Windsor.

The Duchess Josiana left London at the very moment that the wapentake appeared at the Tadcaster Inn to arrest Gwynplaine, and take him to the torture cell in Southwark. When she arrived at Windsor, the Usher of the Black Rod, who guards the door of the presence chamber, informed her that her Majesty was closeted with the Lord Chancellor and could not receive her until the next day; that she was consequently to remain at Corleone Lodge, at the orders of her Majesty; and that she would receive the queen's commands direct, when her Majesty awoke the next morning. Josiana entered her house feeling very spiteful, supped in a bad humour, had the spleen, dismissed every one except her page, then dismissed him, and went to bed while it was yet daylight. On her arrival she had learned that Lord David Dirry-Moir was expected at Windsor the following day, owing to his having, while at sea, received orders to return immediately and receive her Majesty's commands.

CHAPTER III.

AN AWAKENING.

No man could pass suddenly from Siberia into Senegal without losing consciousness. — HUMBOLDT.

THE swoon of a man, even of an exceedingly firm and energetic man, under the sudden shock of an unexpected piece of good fortune, is nothing remarkable. A man is felled by an unexpected blow, as an ox is felled by a poleaxe. Francis d'Albescola, he who tore the iron chains from the Turkish ports, remained unconscious a whole day when they made him pope. But the stride from a cardinal to a pope is much less than that from a mountebank to a Peer of England. No shock is so violent as a loss of equilibrium.

When Gwynplaine came to himself and opened his eyes, it was night. He was in an arm-chair in the middle of a large chamber lined throughout with purple velvet. The carpet was velvet. Standing near him, with uncovered head, was the fat man in the travelling cloak, who had emerged from behind the pillar in the cell at Southwark. Gwynplaine was alone in the chamber with him. From the chair, by extending his arms, he could reach two tables, each bearing a branch of six lighted wax candles. On one of these tables there were papers and a casket, on the other refreshments, — a cold fowl, wine, and brandy, served on a silver-gilt salver.

Through the panes of a high window, reaching from the ceiling to the floor, a semi-circle of pillars could be seen, in the clear April night, encircling a courtyard with three gates, — one very wide, and the other two low. The carriage gate, of great size, was in the middle; on the right, that for equestrians, much smaller; on the left, that for foot passengers, smaller still. These gates were composed of iron railings, with gilded tops. A large group of statuary surmounted the central gate. The columns were probably of white marble, as well as the pavement of the court, thus producing the effect of snow, and framed in this sheet of smooth flags was a mosaic, the pattern of which was but dimly visible in the shadow. This mosaic, when seen by daylight, would no doubt have disclosed to view, with much emblazonry and in many colours, a gigantic coat-of-arms, in the Florentine fashion. Zig-zags of balustrades rose and fell, indicating lines of terraces. Over the court frowned an immense pile of architecture, now shadowy and vague in the starlight. Intervals of sky, filled with stars, defined the outlines of the palace. An enormous roof could be seen, with vaulted gable ends, dormer windows, roofed over like visors; chimneys like towers; and entablatures covered with sportive gods and goddesses. Beyond the colonnade played in the shadow one of those fairy-like fountains in which, as the water falls from basin to basin, was combined the beauty of rain with that of the cascade; and as if scattering the contents of a jewel-box, it flung to the wind its diamonds and its pearls as though to adorn the statues around. The long rows of windows were separated by panoplies in relief, and by busts on small pedestals. On the pinnacles, trophies and morions with plumes cut in stone alternated with statues of heathen deities.

In the chamber where Gwynplaine found himself, on the side opposite the window, was a fireplace which reached to the ceiling; and on the other, under a daïs, stood one of those spacious feudal beds which were reached by a ladder, and where you might sleep lying cross-wise. A joint-stool stood beside it; and a row of arm-chairs around the walls, and a row of ordinary chairs in front of them, completed the furniture. The ceiling was domed. A great wood fire blazed in the fireplace; by the richness of the flames, variegated with rose-colour and green, a judge of such things would have known that the wood was ash, — a great luxury. The room was so large that the candelabra failed to light it up. Here and there curtains falling and swaying over doors indicated communication with other rooms. The style of the room was that of the reign of James I., — a style square and massive, antiquated and magnificent. Like the carpet and hangings of the chamber, the daïs, the baldaquin, the bed, the stool, the curtains, the mantelpiece, the coverings of the table, the sofas, the chairs, were all of purple velvet. There was no gilding, except on the ceiling. Laid on it, at equal distance from the four angles, was a huge round shield of embossed metal, on which sparkled, in dazzling relief, various coats-of-arms; among the devices, on two blazons, side by side, were distinguishable the cap of a baron and the coronet of a marquis. Were they of brass, or of silver-gilt? You could not tell. They seemed to be of gold. And in the centre of this lordly ceiling, so like a gloomy and magnificent sky, the escutcheon gleamed with the splendour of a sun shining in the night.

The savage, in whom the free man is embodied, is nearly as restless in a palace as in a prison. This mag-

nificent chamber was depressing. So much splendour produces fear. Who could be the owner of this stately palace? To what colossus did all this grandeur appertain? Of what lion was this the lair?

Gwynplaine, as yet but half awake, was heavy at heart. "Where am I?" he said.

The man who was standing before him, answered, "You are in your own house, my lord."

CHAPTER IV.

FASCINATION.

IT takes time to rise to the surface. Gwynplaine had been thrown into an abyss of stupefaction. We do not gain our footing at once in unknown depths. There are routs of ideas, as there are routs of armies. The rally is not immediate. We feel as it were scattered; as though some strange evaporation of self were taking place. God is the arm. Chance is the sling. Man is the pebble. How are you to resist, once flung?

Gwynplaine, if we may coin the expression, ricochetted from one surprise to another. After the love-letter of the duchess came the revelation in the Southwark dungeon. In destiny, when wonders begin, prepare yourself for blow upon blow. The gloomy portals once open, prodigies pour in. A breach once made in the wall, and events rush in upon us pell-mell. The marvellous never comes singly. The marvellous is shrouded in mystery. The shadow of this mystery was over Gwynplaine. What was happening to him seemed incomprehensible. He saw everything through the haze which a deep commotion leaves in the mind, like the dust caused by a falling ruin. The shock had been all-pervading. Nothing was clear to him. Light always returns by degrees however. The dust settles. Moment by moment the intense astonishment decreases.

Gwynplaine was like a man with his eyes open and fixed in a dream, as if trying to see what may be within

it. He dispersed the mist; then he re-shaped it. He had intervals of wandering. He underwent that oscillation of mind which alternately pushes us towards that which we understand, and then throws us back into that which is incomprehensible. Who has not at some time felt this pendulum in his brain? By degrees his thoughts dilated in this dense mystery, as the pupil of his eye had done in the subterranean shadows at Southwark. The difficulty was to succeed in putting a certain space between accumulated sensations. Before that combustion of hazy ideas called comprehension can take place, air must be admitted between the emotions. There, air was wanting. The event, so to speak, could not be breathed.

In entering that terrible cell at Southwark, Gwynplaine had expected the iron collar of a felon; they had placed on his head the coronet of a peer. How could this be? There had not been time enough between what Gwynplaine had feared and what had really occurred; it had succeeded too quickly, — his terror changed into other feelings too abruptly for comprehension; the contrasts were too tightly packed one against the other. Gwynplaine made an effort to withdraw his mind from the vice. He was silent. This is the instinct of great stupefaction, which is more on the defensive than it is supposed to be. Who says nothing is prepared for everything. A word you chance to drop may be seized in some unknown system of wheels, and your utter destruction be compassed in the intricate machinery. The poor and weak live in continual terror of being crushed. The crowd always expects to be trodden upon. Gwynplaine had long been one of the crowd.

A singular state of human uneasiness is expressed in the words, "Let us see what will happen." Gwynplaine was in this frame of mind. You feel that you

have not gained your equilibrium when an unexpected situation surges up under your feet. You watch for something which must produce a result. You are vaguely attentive. We will see what happens. What? You do not know.

"You are in your own house, my lord," the man repeated.

Gwynplaine felt himself. In surprises, we first look to make sure that things exist; then we feel ourselves to make sure that we exist ourselves. It was certainly to him that the words were addressed; but he himself must be somebody else. He no longer had his jacket on, or his leather esclavine. He had a waistcoat of cloth of silver, and a satin coat, which he touched and found to be embroidered. He felt a heavy purse in his waistcoat pocket. A pair of velvet trunk hose covered his tights. He wore shoes with high red heels. Before they had brought him to this palace, they must have changed his dress.

The man resumed: "Will your lordship deign to remember this: I am called Barkilphedro; I am a clerk in the Admiralty. It was I who opened Hardquanonne's flask and drew your destiny out of it, as in the Arabian Nights, a fisherman releases a giant from a bottle."

Gwynplaine fixed his eyes on the smiling face of the speaker.

Barkilphedro continued: "Besides this palace, my lord, Hunkerville House, which is much larger, is yours. You own Clancharlie Castle, from which you take your title, and which was a fortress in the time of Edward the Elder. You have nineteen bailiwicks belonging to you, with their villages and their inhabitants. This puts under your jurisdiction, as a landlord and a nobleman, about eighty thousand vassals and tenants. At Clancharlie you are a judge, — judge of

all, both of goods and of persons, and you hold your baron's court. The king has no rights which you have not, except the privilege of coining money. The king, designated by the Norman law as chief signor, has justice, court, and coin. Coin is money. So that you, excepting in this last, are as much a king on your estates as he is in his kingdom. You have the right, as a baron, to a gibbet with four pillars in England; and, as a marquis, to a scaffold with seven posts in Sicily, — that of the mere lord having two pillars; that of a lord of the manor, three; and that of a duke, eight. You are styled prince in the ancient charters of Northumberland. You are related to the Viscounts Valentia in Ireland, whose name is Power, and to the Earls of Umfraville in Scotland, whose name is Angus. You are chief of a clan, like Campbell, Ardmannach, and Macallummore. You have eight barons' courts, — Reculver, Baston, Hell-Kerters, Homble, Moricambe, Grundraith, Trenwardraith, and others. You have a right over the turf-cutting of Pillinmore, and over the alabaster quarries near Trent. Moreover, you own all the country of Penneth Chase; and you have a mountain with an ancient town on it. The town is called Vinecaunton; the mountain is called Moil-enlli. All this gives you an income of forty thousand pounds a year, — that is to say, forty times the five-and-twenty thousand francs with which a Frenchman is satisfied."

While Barkilphedro was speaking, Gwynplaine, in an ever increasing state of stupour, reviewed the past. Memory is a gulf that a word can move to its lowest depths. Gwynplaine knew all the words pronounced by Barkilphedro. They were written in the last lines of the two scrolls which lined the van in which his childhood had been passed, and, from so often letting his eyes wander over them mechanically, he knew them by

heart. A forsaken orphan, on reaching the travelling caravan at Weymouth he had found the inventory of the inheritance which awaited him; and in the morning, when the poor little boy awoke, the first object viewed by his careless and unconscious eyes was his own title and its appurtenances. It was a strange detail added to all the other surprises, that, during fifteen years, rolling from highway to highway, the clown of a travelling theatre, earning his bread day by day, picking up farthings, and living on crumbs, he should have travelled with the inventory of his fortune placarded over his misery.

Barkilphedro touched the casket on the table with his forefinger. "My lord, this casket contains two thousand guineas which her gracious Majesty the queen has sent you for your present needs."

Gwynplaine made a movement. "That shall be for my Father Ursus," he said.

"So be it, my lord," said Barkilphedro. "Ursus, at the Tadcaster Inn. The serjeant who accompanied us hither, and who is to return immediately, will carry the money to him. Perhaps I may go to London myself. In that case I will take charge of it."

"I shall take them to him myself," said Gwynplaine.

Barkilphedro's smile disappeared, and he said, "Impossible!"

There is an impressive inflection of voice which, as it were, underlines one's words. Barkilphedro's tone was thus emphatic; he paused, so as to put a full stop after the word he had just uttered. Then he continued, with the peculiar but respectful tone of a servant who feels that he is master:—

"My lord, you are twenty-three miles from London, at Corleone Lodge, your court residence, contiguous to the Royal Castle of Windsor. You are here unknown

to any one. You were brought here in a close carriage, which was awaiting you at the gate of the jail at Southwark. The servants who introduced you into this palace are ignorant who you are; but they know me, and that is sufficient. You may possibly have been brought to these apartments by means of a private key which is in my possession. There are people in the house asleep, and it is not an hour to awaken them; so we have time for an explanation, which will be short, however. I have been commissioned by her Majesty — ”

As he spoke, Barkilphedro began to turn over the leaves of some bundles of papers which were lying near the casket. “ My lord, here is your patent of peerage. Here is that of your Sicilian marquisate. These are the parchments and title-deeds of your eight baronies, with the seals of eleven kings, from Baldret, King of Kent, to James the Sixth of Scotland, and first of England and Scotland united. Here are your letters of precedence. Here are your rent-rolls and titles, and descriptions of your fiefs, freeholds, dependencies, lands and domains. That which you see above your head in the emblazonment on the ceiling are your two coronets, — the circlet with pearls for the baron, and the circlet with strawberry leaves for the marquis. Here, in the wardrobe, is your peer’s robe of red velvet, bordered with ermine. To-day, only a few hours ago, the Lord Chancellor and the Deputy Earl Marshal of England, — informed of the result of your confrontation with the Comprachico Hard-quanonne, — have received her Majesty’s commands. Her Majesty has signed them, according to her royal will, which is the same as the law. All formalities have been complied with. To-morrow, and no later than to-morrow, you will take your seat in the House of Lords, where they have for some days been deliberating on a bill presented by the Crown, having for its

object the augmentation, by a hundred thousand pounds sterling yearly, of the allowance to the Duke of Cumberland, husband of the queen. You will be able to take part in the debate."

Barkilphedro paused, breathed slowly, and resumed: "However, nothing is yet settled. A man cannot be made a peer of England without his own consent. Everything can be annulled unless you acquiesce. An event nipped in the bud ere it ripens often occurs in state policy. My lord, up to this time silence has been preserved on what has occurred. The House of Lords will not be informed of the facts until to-morrow. Secrecy has been maintained concerning the whole matter for reasons of State, which are of such importance that the influential persons who alone are at this moment cognizant of your existence and of your rights will forget them immediately should reasons of State necessitate their being forgotten. That which is in darkness may remain in darkness. It is easy to blot you out, the more so as you have a brother, the natural son of your father and of a woman who afterwards, during the exile of your father, became a mistress of King Charles II., which accounts for your brother's high position in court; for it is to this brother, bastard though he be, that your peerage would revert. Do you desire this? I cannot think so. Well, all depends on you. The queen must be obeyed. You will not quit this house till to-morrow in a royal carriage, and then to go to the House of Lords. My lord, will you be a peer of England,—yes or no? The queen has designs for you. She destines you for an almost royal alliance. Lord Fermain Clancharlie, this is the decisive moment. Destiny never opens one door without shutting another. After a certain step forward, a step backward is impossible. Whoso

enters into transfiguration leaves evanescence behind him. My lord, Gwynplaine is dead. Do you understand?"

Gwynplaine trembled from head to foot. Then he recovered himself. "Yes," he said.

Barkilphedro smiled, bowed, placed the casket under his cloak, and left the room.

CHAPTER V.

WE THINK WE REMEMBER; WE FORGET.

WHENCE arise those strange, visible changes which occur in the human soul?

Gwynplaine had been at the same moment raised to a lofty eminence and hurled into an abyss. His head swam with double giddiness, — the giddiness of ascent and descent; a fatal combination. He felt himself ascend, and felt not his fall. It is appalling to see a new horizon; a perspective affords suggestions, — but not always good ones. He had before him the fairy glade, — a snare, perhaps, seen through opening clouds, and showing the blue depths of sky, so deep that they are obscure. He was on a mountain, whence he could see all the kingdoms of the earth, — a mountain all the more terrible by reason of being an imaginary one. Those who are on its apex are in a dream. There where Satan tempted Jesus, how could mortal man hope even to struggle? Palaces, castles, power, opulence, every earthly blessing extending as far as eye could reach, — a map of enjoyments stretching to the horizon; a sort of radiant chart of which he was the centre. A perilous mirage!

Imagine what must have been the effect of such a vision, not attained to as by the gradual steps of a ladder but reached without transition and without previous warning. A man going to sleep in a mole's burrow, and awaking on the top of the Strasbourg steeple, — such was

Gwynplaine's condition. Giddiness is dangerous, particularly that giddiness which bears you at once towards the day and towards the night, forming two whirlwinds, one opposed to the other. He saw too much, and not enough. He saw all, and nothing. His state was what the author of this book has somewhere expressed as the blind man dazzled.

Gwynplaine, left to himself, began to walk with long strides. A bubbling precedes an explosion. Despite his agitation, and the impossibility of keeping still, he meditated. His mind liquefied as it boiled. He began to recall things to his memory. It is surprising to find how clearly we understand that to which we scarcely listened. The confession of the shipwrecked men, read by the sheriff in the Southwark cell, came back to him clearly and intelligibly. He recalled every word, he saw under it his whole infancy. Suddenly he stopped, his hands clasped behind his back, looking up to the ceiling,—the sky, no matter what; whatever was above him. "Quits!" he cried. He felt like one whose head rises out of the water. It seemed to him that he saw everything—the past, the future, the present—in the accession of a sudden flash of light.

"Oh!" he cried, for there are cries in the depths of thought. "Oh, it was so, was it? I was a lord. All is discovered. They stole, betrayed, destroyed, abandoned, disinherited, murdered me! The corpse of my destiny floated fifteen years on the sea; all at once it touched the earth, and it started up, erect and living. I am reborn. I felt that the breast palpitating under my rags was not that of a base-born wretch; and when I looked on crowds of men, I felt that they were the flocks, and that I was not the dog, but the shepherd! Shepherds of the people, leaders of men, guides and masters, — such were my fathers; and what they were,

I am! I am a gentleman, and I have a sword; I am a baron, and I have a casque; I am a marquis, and I have a plume; I am a peer, and I have a coronet. Lo! they deprived me of all these. I dwelt in light, they flung me into darkness. Those who proscribed the father, sold the son. When my father was dead, they took from beneath his head the stone of exile which he had placed for his pillow, and tying it to my neck, flung me into a sewer. Oh, those scoundrels who tortured my infancy! Yes, they rise and move about in the recesses of my memory. Yes, I see them again. I was that morsel of flesh pecked to pieces on a tomb by a flock of crows. I bled and cried under the remorseless hands of those horrible creatures. Lo! it was there that they precipitated me, under the tread of those who come and go, under the trampling feet of men, under the lowest of the human race, — lower than the serf, lower than the serving-man, lower than the felon, lower than the slave. At the spot where Chaos becomes a sewer, there I was engulfed. It is from thence that I come; it is from this that I rise; it is from this that I am risen. And here I am now. Quits!"

Gwynplaine sat down, he rose again, clasped his head between his hands, and began to pace the room again, continuing his excited monologue the while.

"Where am I, — on the summit. Where is it that I have just alighted, — on the highest peak. This pinnacle, this grandeur, this dome of the world, this lofty eminence, this temple in mid-air is my home. I am one of the gods. I dwell on inaccessible heights. This supremacy which I looked up at from below, and from whence emanated such rays of glory that I shut my eyes; this exalted peerage, this impregnable fortress of the fortunate, — I now enter. I am in it; I am of it. Ah, what a decisive turn of fortune's wheel! I was

below, I am now on top,—on top forever! Behold me a lord! I shall have a scarlet robe; I shall have an earl's coronet on my head; I shall assist at the coronation of kings,—they will take the oath from my hands; I shall judge princes and ministers. From the depths into which I was thrown, I have rebounded to the zenith. I have palaces in town and country,—houses, gardens, chases, forests, carriages, millions. I will give *fêtes*; I will make laws. I shall have my pick of joys and pleasures; and the vagabond Gwynplaine, who had no right to gather a flower of the field, may now pluck the stars from heaven!"

Melancholy overshadowing of a soul's brightness! Thus it was that in Gwynplaine, who had been a hero, and who perhaps had not ceased to be one, moral greatness succumbed before material splendour. A lamentable transition! Virtue broken down by a troop of passing demons; an attack made on the weak side of a man's nature; all the paltry desires to which men attach such importance,—ambition, the purblind desires of instinct, passions, covetousness, driven far from Gwynplaine by the wholesome restraints of misfortune, took tumultuous possession of his generous heart. And from what had this arisen? From the discovery of a bit of parchment in a waif drifted by the sea. Conscience may be violated by a chance attack.

Gwynplaine drank in great draughts of pride, which dulled all the noble instincts of his soul. Such is the poisonous effect of that fatal wine. Intoxication invaded him. He more than consented to its approach,—he welcomed it. This was the effect of previous and long-continued thirst. Are we an accomplice of the cup which deprives us of reason? He had always vaguely desired this. His eyes had always turned longingly towards the great. To watch is to wish. The eaglet is not born in

the eyrie for nothing. It seemed to him the simplest thing in the world that he should be a lord. A few hours only had passed, and yet the past of yesterday seemed so far away. Gwynplaine had fallen into the ambushade of Better, who is the enemy of Good.

Unhappy is he of whom we say, How lucky he is! Adversity is more easily resisted than prosperity. We rise more perfect from ill fortune than from good. There is a Charybdis in poverty and a Scylla in riches. Those who remain erect under the thunderbolt are prostrated by the flash. Thou who standest without shrinking on the verge of a precipice, fear lest thou be carried up on the daring wings of mists and dreams. The ascent which elevates may dwarf thee. An apotheosis has a grim power of degradation. It is not easy to understand what good luck is. Chance is nothing but a disguise. Nothing is so deceptive as the face of fortune. Is she Providence? or is she Fatality? The light which seems to shine so brightly may not be genuine; for light is truth, and this gleam may be a delusion only. You believe that it is lighting you; but no, it is only setting you on fire. At night, a candle made of mean tallow becomes a star if placed in an opening in the darkness. The moth flies to it. To what extent is the moth responsible? The light of the candle fascinates the moth as the eye of the serpent fascinates the bird. Is it possible for the bird and the moth to resist the attraction? Is it possible for the leaf to resist the wind? Is it possible for the stone to refuse obedience to the laws of gravitation? These are material questions, which are moral questions as well.

After he had received the letter of the duchess, Gwynplaine had recovered himself. The deep love in his nature had resisted it. But the storm having wearied itself on one side of the horizon, burst out on the other;

for in destiny, as in Nature, there are successive convulsions. The first shock loosens, the second uproots. Alas! how do oaks fall! Thus he who, as a child of ten, stood alone on the shore of Portland, ready to give battle; who had steadfastly confronted all the dangers he had to encounter, — the blast which bore away the vessel in which he had expected to embark, the gulf which had swallowed up the plank, the precipice which yawned beneath him, the earth which refused him a shelter, the sky which refused him a star to guide him; he who had neither trembled nor fainted before the mighty hostility of the unknown; he who while still so young, had held his own with night, as Hercules of old had held his own with death; he who in the unequal struggle had encumbered himself with a load, while tired and exhausted, thus rendering himself an easier prey to the dangers environing him; he who from his first steps out of the cradle had struggled breast to breast with destiny; he who had struggled on undaunted by his weakness; he who, perceiving in everything around him a frightful occultation of the human race, had accepted that eclipse, and proudly continued his journey; he who had known how to endure cold, thirst, hunger, uncomplainingly; he who, though but a pygmy in stature, had been a colossus in soul, — this Gwynplaine, who had conquered the great enemy of the human race under its twofold form, Tempest and Misery, staggered under a mere breath, — vanity.

Thus, when she has exhausted distress, nakedness, storms, and catastrophies on an unflinching man, Fate begins to smile, and her victim, suddenly intoxicated, succumbs. The smile of Fate, — can anything more terrible be imagined? It is the last resource of the pitiless tempter of souls in his test of man. The tiger, lurking in destiny, caresses man with a velvet paw.

Sinister preparation, hideous gentleness in the monster! Every self-observer has detected within himself mental weakness coincident with aggrandizement. A too rapid growth disturbs the system, and produces fever.

Gwynplaine's brain was bewildered with a host of novel circumstances, — all the lights and shades of a metamorphosis; inexpressibly strange confrontations; the contrast between the past and the future. He beheld two Gwynplaines: behind him, an infant in rags, crawling through the mire, — wandering, shivering, hungry, provoking laughter; before him, a brilliant nobleman, luxurious, proud, — dazzling all London. He was casting off one form, and incorporating himself with the other. He was casting the mountebank, and becoming the peer. Change of skin is sometimes a change of soul. Now and then the past seemed like a dream. It was complex, — bad and good. He thought of his father. It was a poignant anguish never to have known his father. He tried to picture that father to himself. He thought of his brother, of whom he had just heard. So he had relatives, — he, Gwynplaine! He lost himself in fantastic dreams; he saw visions of magnificence; unknown forms of solemn grandeur moved in mist before him; he heard flourishes of trumpets.

“And then,” he said, “I shall be eloquent.”

He pictured to himself a brilliant entrance into the House of Lords. He would have so many new facts and ideas to impart to them. What could he not tell them? What a store of information he had accumulated! What an advantage to have him in the midst of them, — a man who had seen, touched, undergone, and suffered; who could cry aloud to them, “I have been near to everything from which you are so far removed.” He would hurl reality in the face of those patricians, crammed full of illusions. They would tremble, for it

would be the truth that he would tell them. They would applaud, his utterances would be grand and convincing. He would arise among those powerful men more powerful than they. "I shall appear as a torch-bearer, to show them truth; and as a sword-bearer, to show them justice!" What a triumph!

As these fancies were passing through Gwynplaine's mind, he had attacks of delirium,—now sinking on the first seat he came to, now hastily starting up. He walked to and fro, looked up at the ceiling, examined the coronets, studied the hieroglyphics in the emblazonment, felt the velvet on the walls, moved the chairs, turned over the parchments, read the names, spelled out the titles,—Buxton, Homble, Grundraith, Hunkerville, Clancharlie; compared the wax, the impression; felt the twist of silk appended to the royal privy seal; approached the window, listened to the splash of the fountain, contemplated the statues; counted, with the patience of a somnambulist, the marble columns, and said to himself, "It is real."

Then he touched his satin clothes, and asked, "Is this I? Yes."

He was torn by an inward tempest. Was he conscious of faintness and fatigue during this whirlwind of emotion? Did he eat, drink, or sleep? If he did so, he was unconscious of the fact. In certain mental conditions, instinct satisfies itself, according to its requirements, but unconsciously. When the lurid flames of an eruption rise from depths full of boiling lava, has the crater any consciousness of the flocks which crop the grass at the foot of the mountain?

The hours passed. The dawn appeared, and brought the day. A bright ray penetrated the chamber, and at the same instant burst on the soul of Gwynplaine.

"And Dea!" said the light.

BOOK VI.

URSUS UNDER DIFFERENT ASPECTS.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT THE MISANTHROPE SAID.

AFTER Ursus had seen Gwynplaine disappear within the gates of Southwark jail, he lingered, pale with terror, in the corner from which he was watching. For a long time his ears were haunted by the creaking of bolts and bars, which seemed to howl with joy that one wretch more should be confined within them.

Ursus waited. What for? He watched. What for? Such inexorable doors, once shut, do not re-open soon. They are tongue-tied by their stagnation in darkness, and move with difficulty, especially when they have to give up a prisoner. Entrance is permitted; exit is quite a different matter. Ursus knew this. But waiting is a thing which we have not the power to abandon at will. We wait in spite of ourselves. In such cases there is a force, which maintains its action after its object has ceased, which retains possession of us and holds us, and obliges us to continue that which has already lost its motive. Hence the useless watch, the inert position that we have all maintained, the loss of time which every thoughtful man mechanically gives to that which has disappeared. No one can escape this

law. We become stubborn. We know not why we linger in the place, but we do linger. That which we have begun actively, we continue passively, with a grim tenacity from which we emerge overwhelmed. Ursus, though different from other men, was, as any other might have been, nailed to his post by that sort of watchful reverie into which we are plunged by events which are all-important to us, but in which we are impotent. He scrutinized by turns those two black walls, — now the high one, then the low; sometimes the door near which the ladder of the gibbet stood, then that surmounted by a death's head. It was as if he were caught in a vice, composed of a prison and a cemetery. This shunned and unpopular street was so deserted that he was unobserved.

At length Ursus left the archway under which he had taken shelter, — a kind of chance sentry-box, in which he had played the watchman, — and departed with slow steps. The day was declining, for his watch had been long. From time to time he turned his head and looked at the grim doorway through which Gwynplaine had disappeared. His eyes were glassy and dull. He reached the end of the alley, entered another, then another, retracing almost unconsciously the course which he had followed some hours before. At intervals he turned, as if he could still see the door of the prison, though he was no longer in the street in which the jail was located. Step by step he was approaching Tarrinzeau Field. The lanes in the neighbourhood of the fair-ground were deserted pathways between enclosed gardens. He walked along with head bent down, between the hedges and ditches. All at once he halted, and drawing himself up, exclaimed, "So much the better!" At the same time he struck his fist twice on his head and twice on his thigh, thus proving himself to be a sensible fellow

who saw things in their right light. Then he began to growl inwardly, now and then bursting into speech, however.

“It is all right! Oh, the scoundrel! the thief! the vagabond! the worthless fellow! the seditious scamp! It is his speeches about the Government that have sent him there. He is a rebel. I was harbouring a rebel. I am rid of him, and a lucky thing it is for me; he was compromising us. Thrust into prison! So much the better! What excellent laws! Ungrateful boy! I brought him up! Think of having given one’s self so much trouble for this! Why should he want to talk and to reason? He must needs mix himself up in politics, the ass! As he handled pennies he babbled about the taxes, about the poor, about the people, about what was no business of his. He allowed himself to make remarks on the coinage. He commented wickedly and maliciously on the copper money of the kingdom. He insulted the farthings of her Majesty. A farthing, — why, ’t is the same as the queen. A sacred effigy, — devil take it! A sacred effigy. Have we a queen, yes or no? Then respect her verdigris! Everything depends on the Government: one ought to know that. I have had experience, I have. I know something. They may say to me, ‘Why, you must give up politics altogether, then.’ Politics, my friends, I care as much for them as for the rough hide of an ass. I received, one day, a blow from a baronet’s cane. I said to myself, that is enough; I understand politics. The people have but a farthing, they give it; the queen takes it, the people thank her. Nothing can be more natural. It is for the peers to manage the rest, — their lordships, our lords spiritual and temporal. So Gwynplaine is locked up. So he is in prison! That is as it should be. It is

right, excellent, well-merited, and legitimate. It is his own fault. Criticism is forbidden. Are you a lord, you idiot? The constable has seized him, the justice of the quorum has carried him off, the sheriff has him in custody. At this moment he is probably being examined by a serjeant of the coif. They'll find out your crimes, those clever fellows! Imprisoned, my wag! So much the worse for him, so much the better for me! I am satisfied. I own frankly that fortune favours me. What folly I was guilty of when I picked up that little boy and girl! We were so quiet before, Homo and I! What business had they in my van, the little blackguards! Didn't I brood over them when they were young? Didn't I drag them many a mile? Pretty foundlings, indeed! he as ugly as sin, and she blind of both eyes! What was the use of depriving myself of everything for their sakes? The beggars grow up, forsooth, and make love to each other. The flirtations of the afflicted. It was to that we had come. The toad and the mole; quite an idyl! A fine state of things in a household. They were sure to end by going before a justice. The toad must needs talk politics. But now I am rid of him. When the wapentake came I acted like a fool; one always doubts one's good luck. I believed that I did not see what I did see; that it was impossible, that it was a nightmare, that some one was playing a trick on me. But, no! nothing could be truer. It is all clear now. Gwynplaine is really in prison. It is a fortunate dispensation of Providence. Praise be to it! He was a monster who by the row he made drew attention to my establishment, and caused my poor wolf to be denounced. Be off, Gwynplaine! And behold, I am rid of both! Two birds killed with one stone; for Dea is sure to die, now that she can no longer see Gwynplaine.

For she dotes on him, the idiot! She will have no object in life. She will say, 'What am I to do in the world?' Good-bye! To the devil with both of them! I always hated the creatures! Die, Dea, if you choose. I shall be glad of it!"

CHAPTER II.

WHAT HE DID.

URSUS returned to the Tadcaster Inn. It was half-past six and nearly dark.

Master Nicless was standing on his doorstep. He had not succeeded in regaining his composure since morning, and terror was still apparent in his face. He perceived Ursus afar off.

"Well!" he cried.

"Well! what?"

"Is Gwynplaine coming back? It is full time. The people will soon be coming in. Shall we have a performance by 'The Laughing Man' this evening?"

"I am the laughing man," said Ursus; and he looked at the tavern-keeper and chuckled loudly.

Then Ursus went up to the first floor, opened the window next to the sign of the inn, leaned over the placard about Gwynplaine, the laughing man, and the bill of "Chaos Vanquished;" unnailed the one, tore down the other, put both under his arm, and came down again.

Master Nicless watched him with wondering eyes.

"Why do you take those in?"

Ursus burst into a second fit of laughter.

"Why do you laugh?" said the tavern-keeper.

"I am re-entering private life."

Master Nicless understood, and gave an order to his assistant, the boy Govicum, to announce to any one who might come that there would be no performance

that evening. He took from the door the box made out of a cask, where they received the entrance money, and rolled it into a corner of the lower sitting-room.

A moment after, Ursus entered the Green Box. He put the two signs away in a corner, and entered what he called the woman's wing.

Dea was asleep. She was lying on her bed, dressed as usual, excepting that the body of her gown was loosened, as when she was taking her siesta. Near her Vinos and Fibi were sitting, — one on a stool, the other on the ground, — musing. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, they had not dressed themselves in their goddesses' gauze, which was a sign of deep discouragement. They still wore their drugget petticoats, and jackets of coarse cloth.

Ursus looked at Dea. "She is rehearsing for a longer sleep," murmured he. Then addressing Fibi and Vinos: "You both know all. The jig is up. You can put your trumpets away in the drawer. You were wise not to rig yourselves out as goddesses. You look ugly enough, but you were quite right. Keep on your petticoats. There will be no performance to-night, nor to-morrow, nor the day after to-morrow. No Gwynplaine. Gwynplaine is clean gone."

Then Ursus looked at Dea again. "What a blow this will be to her! It will be like blowing out a candle." He inflated his cheeks. "Puff! nothing more."

Then, with a little dry laugh: "Losing Gwynplaine, she loses all. It will be the same as if I were to lose Homo. It will be even worse. She will feel more lonely than any one else could. The blind wade through more sorrow than we do."

Ursus looked out of the window at the end of the room. "How the days lengthen! It is not dark at seven o'clock. Nevertheless, we will light up." He

struck the steel and lighted the lamp which hung from the ceiling of the Green Box. Then he leaned over Dea. "She will catch cold; you have opened her bodice too much. There is a proverb, —

‘Though April skies be bright,
Keep all your wrappers tight.’”

Seeing a pin shining on the floor, Ursus picked it up, and stuck it in his sleeve. Then he paced the Green Box, gesticulating all the while: "I am in full possession of my faculties. I am sane, quite sane. I consider this occurrence quite proper, and I approve of what has been done. When she wakes I will explain everything to her. The catastrophe will not be long in coming. No more Gwynplaine: good-night, Dea. How well everything has been arranged! Gwynplaine in prison, Dea in the cemetery: they will be *vis-à-vis*! A dance of death! Two actors going off the stage at once. Pack up the dresses; fasten the valise. For *valise*, read *coffin*. It is the best thing that could have happened to both. Dea without eyes, Gwynplaine without a face. On high the Almighty will restore sight to Dea and beauty to Gwynplaine. Death puts things to rights; all will be well. Fibi, Vinos, hang your tambourines on the nail. Your talents for noise will go to rust, my beauties. No more playing, no more trumpeting. 'Chaos Vanquished' is vanquished indeed. 'The Laughing Man' is done for. 'Taratantara' is dead. Dea sleeps on; she does well. If I were in her place, I would never awake. Oh, she will soon fall asleep again; a skylark like her takes very little killing. This comes of meddling with politics. What a lesson! Governments are always right; so Gwynplaine to the sheriff, and Dea to the grave-digger. Parallel cases! Wonderful similarity! I hope the tavern-keeper has

barred the door. We are going to die to-night quietly at home, by ourselves, — not I or Homo, but Dea. As for me, I shall continue to travel with the van. I belong to the army of vagabonds. I shall dismiss these two women; I shall not even keep one of them. I might, perhaps, become an old *roué*; a maid-servant in the house of a libertine is like a loaf of bread on the shelf. I decline the temptation. It would not be becoming at my age, — *turpe senilis amor*. I will go my way alone with Homo. How astonished Homo will be! Where is Gwynplaine? Where is Dea? Old comrade, here we are once more alone together. Plague take it! I'm delighted. Their rhapsodies were a bore! Oh, that scamp of a Gwynplaine, who is never coming back! He has left us stuck here. "All right," I say. And now 'tis Dea's turn. That won't be long. I like things to be done with. I would not snap my fingers to stop her dying, — dying, I tell you! See, she wakes!"

Dea opened her eyelids; many blind persons shut them when they sleep. Her sweet ingenuous face wore all its usual radiance.

"She smiles," whispered Ursus, "and I laugh. That is as it should be."

Dea called. "Fibi! Vinos! It must be the time for the performance. I think I have been asleep a long time. Come and dress me."

Neither Fibi nor Vinos moved.

As Dea's sightless orbs met those of Ursus, he started. "Well!" he cried; "what are you about? Vinos! Fibi! Do you not hear your mistress? Are you deaf? Quick! the play is about to begin."

The two women looked at Ursus in amazement.

"Do you not hear the audience coming in?" he shouted. Fibi, dress Dea. Vinos, take your tambourine."

Fibi was obedient; Vinos, passive. Together, they

personified submission. Their master, Ursus, had always been to them an enigma. Never to be understood is a reason for being always obeyed. They simply thought he had gone mad, and did as they were told. Fibi took down Dea's costume, and Vinos the tambourine. Fibi began to dress Dea.

Ursus let down the curtain of the women's room, and from behind the curtain continued: "Look here, Gwynplaine! the court is more than half full of people already. What a crowd! And you say that Fibi and Vinos look as if they did not see them. How stupid the gipsies are! Don't lift the curtain from the door; be decent, — Dea is dressing."

Ursus paused, and suddenly they heard an exclamation: "How beautiful Dea is!"

It was the voice of Gwynplaine. Fibi and Vinos started, and turned round. It was the voice of Gwynplaine, but in the mouth of Ursus.

Ursus, by a sign which he made through the half-open door, forbade the expression of any astonishment. Then, again counterfeiting the voice of Gwynplaine: "Angel!" Then he replied in his own voice: "Dea an angel! You are a fool, Gwynplaine. No mammifer except the bat can fly." And he added: "Look here, Gwynplaine! Let Homo loose; that will be more to the purpose."

Whereupon Ursus descended the ladder of the Green Box very quickly, with the agile spring of Gwynplaine, imitating his step so that Dea could hear it. In the court he addressed the boy, whom the occurrences of the day had made idle and inquisitive. "Spread out both your hands," said he, in a loud voice. And he poured a handful of pence into them.

Govicum was grateful for his munificence.

Ursus whispered in his ear: "Boy, go into the yard;

jump, dance, knock, bawl, whistle coo, neigh, applaud, stamp your feet, burst out laughing, break something."

Master Nicless, saddened and humiliated at seeing the folks who had come to see "The Laughing Man" turned away and crowding towards other shows, had shut the door of the inn. He had even given up the idea of selling any beer or spirits that evening, so he would have to answer no awkward questions; and, quite overcome by the sudden close of the performance, he was gazing down, candle in hand, into the courtyard from the balcony above.

Ursus, taking the precaution of putting his voice between parentheses fashioned by adjusting the palms of his hands to his mouth, called out to him: "Do as your boy is doing, sir; yelp, bark, howl." He reascended the steps of the Green Box, and said to the wolf: "*Talk* as much as you can." Then, raising his voice: "What a crowd there is! We shall have a crammed performance."

In the mean time Vinos played the tambourine. Ursus went on: "Dea is dressed; now we can begin. I am sorry they have admitted so many spectators. How thickly packed they are! Look, Gwynplaine, what a mob it is. I'll bet that we take more money to-day than we have ever done yet. Come, gipsies, play up, both of you. Come here. Fibi, take your clarionet. Good! Vinos, drum on your tambourine; fling it up and catch it again. Fibi, put yourself in the attitude of Fame. Young ladies, you have too much on. Take off those jackets; replace stuff by gauze. The public like to see the female form exposed. Let the moralists thunder. A little indecent—devil take it! What of that? Look voluptuous, and rush into wild melodies. Snort, blow, whistle, flourish, play the tambourine. What a crowd of people, my poor Gwynplaine!"

Here Ursus interrupted himself. "Gwynplaine, help me. Let down the platform." He spread out his pocket-handkerchief. "But first let me blow my nose." Having returned his handkerchief to his pocket, he drew the pegs out of the pulleys, which creaked as usual as the platform descended. "Gwynplaine, do not draw the curtain until the performance begins. We are not alone. You two come on in front. Music, ladies! tum, tum, tum. A pretty audience we have! the dregs of the people. Good heavens!"

The two gipsies, stupidly obedient, placed themselves in their usual corners of the platform. Then Ursus became truly wonderful. He was no longer a man, but a crowd of men. Obligated to make abundance out of emptiness, he called to his aid all his prodigious powers of ventriloquism. The whole orchestra of human and animal voices within him were brought into action at once. Any one with his eyes closed would have imagined that he was in a public place on some day of rejoicing, or in some sudden popular riot. A whirlwind of clamour proceeded from Ursus; he sang, he shouted, he talked, he coughed, he spat, he sneezed, took snuff, talked and responded, put questions and gave answers, all at once. The half-uttered syllables ran one into another. In the court, untenanted by a single spectator, men, women, and children could be plainly heard. Strange laughter wound, vapour-like, through the noise, the chirping of birds, the swearing of cats, the wailings of children at the breast. The indistinct tones of drunken men could be heard, and the growls of dogs under the feet of people who stamped on them. The cries came from far and near, from top and bottom, from the upper boxes and the pit. The whole place was in an uproar. Ursus clapped his hands, stamped his feet, threw his voice to the end of the court, and then made it come from under-

ground. He was himself, and any and every one else. Alone, and polyglot. As there are optical illusions, so there are also auricular illusions. That which Proteus did for the sight, Ursus did for the hearing. From time to time he opened the door of the women's apartment and looked at Dea. Dea was listening.

The boy exerted himself to the utmost. Vinos and Fibi trumpeted conscientiously, and took turns with the tambourine. Master Nicless, the only spectator, quietly gave himself the same explanation that they did, — that Ursus had gone mad, which was, for that matter, but another sad item added to his misery. "How very unfortunate!" growled the tavern-keeper. And he was very serious, as a man might well be who had the fear of the law before him.

Govicum, delighted at being able to help in making a noise, exerted himself almost as much as Ursus. It amused him, and, moreover, it earned him pence.

Homo seemed pensive.

In the midst of the tumult Ursus now and then uttered such exclamations as these:—

"There is a cabal against us, as usual, Gwynplaine. Our rivals are trying to impair our success, — to mar our triumph. Besides, there are too many people. They are uncomfortable. The angles of their neighbours' elbows do not increase their good-nature. I hope the benches will not give way. We shall be the victims of an incensed populace. Oh, if our friend Tom-Jim-Jack were only here! but he never comes now. Look at those heads rising one above another. Those who are forced to stand don't look very well pleased, though the great Galen pronounced it to be strengthening. We will shorten the entertainment; as only 'Chaos Vanquished' was announced in the play-bill, we will not play 'Ursus Rursus.' There will be something gained

by that. What an uproar! O blind turbulence of the masses! They will do us some damage. However, they can't go on like this. We should not be able to play. No one could hear a word of the piece. I am going to address them. Gwynplaine, draw the curtain a little aside. — Gentlemen — ”

Here Ursus addressed himself with a shrill and feeble voice:—

“ Down with that old fool! ”

Then he answered in his own voice.

“ It seems that the mob wish to insult me. Cicero is right; *plebs, fex urbis*. Never mind, we will admonish the mob, though I shall have a great deal of trouble to make myself heard. I shall speak, notwithstanding. Man, do your duty. Gwynplaine, look at that scold grinding her teeth down there. ”

There was a pause, in which Ursus gnashed his teeth viciously.

Then he went on:—

“ The women are worse than the men. The moment is unpropitious, but it doesn't matter! Let us try the effect of a speech; an eloquent speech is never amiss. Listen, Gwynplaine, to my attractive exordium. Ladies and gentlemen, I am a bear. I take off my head to address you. I humbly appeal to you for silence. ”

Ursus, lending a cry to the crowd, said, —

“ Grumphll! ”

Then he continued:—

“ I respect my audience. Grumphll is as good an epiphonema as any other. You growlers! that you are all of the dregs of the people, I do not doubt. That in no way diminishes my esteem for you, — a well grounded esteem. I have a profound respect for the bullies who honour me with their custom. There are deformed folks among you. They give me no offence.

The lame and the humpbacked are works of Nature. The camel is gibbous. The bison's back is humped. The badger's left legs are shorter than the right. That fact is decided by Aristotle, in his treatise on the gait of animals. There are those among you who have but two shirts,—one on his back and the other at the pawnbroker's. I know that to be true. Albuquerque pawned his moustache, and Saint Denis his aureole. The Jews advanced money upon the aureole. Great examples! To have debts is to possess something. I honour your beggary."

Ursus cut his speech short, interrupting it in a deep bass voice by the shout of:—

"Triple ass!"

He answered in his politest accents.

"I admit it. I am a learned man. I humbly apologize for it. I have all a scientist's contempt for science. Ignorance is a reality on which we feed; science a reality on which we starve. One is generally obliged to choose between two things. To be learned and grow thin, or to browse and be an Ass. Browse, gentlemen! Science is not worth a mouthful of anything nice. I had rather eat a sirloin of beef than know what they call the *psaos* muscle. I have but one merit,—a dry eye. Such as you see me, I have never wept. It must be owned that I have never been satisfied—never—not even with myself. I despise myself, but I submit this to the members of the opposition here present: though Ursus is only a learned man, Gwynplaine is an artist."

"Grumphll!" he groaned again.

Then resumed:—

"Grumphll again! It is an objection. All the same, I pass it over. With Gwynplaine, gentlemen and ladies, there is another artist, a valued and distinguished person—

age who accompanies us,—his lordship Homo, formerly a wild dog, now a civilized wolf, and a faithful subject of her Majesty's. Homo is a mine of deep and superior talent. Be attentive and watch. You are going to see Homo play as well as Gwynplaine, and you must do honour to art. That is an attribute of great nations. Are you men of the woods? I admit the fact. In that case, *silvæ sint consule dignæ*. Two artists are well worth one consul. All right! Some one has flung a cabbage stalk at me, but did not hit me. That will not stop my speaking; on the contrary, a danger evaded makes folks garrulous, *Garrula pericula*, says Juvenal. My hearers! there are among you drunken men and drunken women. Very well. The men are loathsome, the women hideous. You have all sorts of excellent reasons for stowing yourselves away here on the benches of the pothouse,—want of work, idleness, the spare time between two robberies, porter, ale, stout, malt, brandy, gin, and the attraction of one sex for the other. What could be better? A wit prone to irony would find this a fair field. But I abstain. It is a luxury; so be it; but even an orgy should be kept within bounds. You are gay, but noisy. You imitate the cries of wild beasts very successfully; but what would you say if, when you were making love to a lady, I passed my time in barking at you? It would disturb you, and so it disturbs us. I order you to hold your tongues. Art is as respectable as debauchery. I speak to you civilly."

He apostrophized himself:—

"May the fever strangle you, with your eyebrows like the beard of rye."

And he replied, —

"Honourable gentlemen, let the rye alone. It is impious to insult the vegetables by likening them either to human creatures or animals. Besides, the fever

does not strangle. 'Tis a false metaphor. For pity's sake, keep silence. Allow me to tell you that you are sadly wanting in the repose which characterizes the true English gentleman. I see that some among you who have shoes out of which their toes are peeping, take advantage of the circumstance to rest their feet on the shoulders of those who are in front of them, causing the ladies to remark that the soles of shoes always divide at the part near the head of the metatarsal bones. Show more of your hands, and less of your feet. I see scamps plunging their cunning fists into the pockets of their foolish neighbours. Dear pickpockets, have a little modesty. Fight those next to you if you like; do not plunder them. You will vex them less by blackening an eye than by lightening their purses of a penny. Break their noses, if you like. The shop-keeper thinks more of his money than of his beauty. Barring this, accept my sympathy, for I am not pedantic enough to blame thieves. Evil exists. Every one endures it, every one inflicts it. No one is exempt from the scourge of his sins. That's what I keep saying. Have we not all our itch? I, myself, have made mistakes. *Plaudite, cives.*"

Ursus uttered a long groan, which he silenced by these concluding words:—

"My lords and gentlemen, I see that my address has unluckily displeased you. I take leave of your hisses for a moment. I shall put on my head, and the performance is about to begin."

He dropped his oratorical tone, and resumed in his usual voice:—

"Drop the curtain. Let me breathe. I have spoken like honey. I have spoken well. My words were like velvet; but they were useless. I called them my lords and gentlemen. What do you think of all this scum, Gwynplaine? How well may we estimate the ills

which England has suffered for the last forty years through the ill-temper of these irritable and malicious spirits. The ancient Britons were warlike, these are melancholy and learned. They glory in despising the laws and contemning royal authority. I have done all that human eloquence can do. I have been prodigal of metonymies, as gracious as the blooming cheek of youth. Were they softened by them? I doubt it. What can affect a people who eat so extraordinarily, who stupefy themselves by tobacco so completely that their literary men often write their works with a pipe in their mouths? Never mind. Let us begin the play."

The rings of the curtain could be heard slipping along the rod. The tambourines of the gipsies were silent. Ursus took down his instrument, executed his prelude, and said in a low tone:—

"Alas! Gwynplaine, how mysterious it is."

Then he flung himself down with the wolf.

When he had taken down his instrument, he had also taken from the nail a rough wig, which he had thrown on the stage in a corner within his reach. The performance of "Chaos Vanquished" took place as usual, minus only the effect of the blue light, and the brilliancy of the fairies. The wolf played his best. At the proper moment Dea made her appearance, and, in her voice so tremulous and heavenly, invoked Gwynplaine. She extended her arms, feeling for that beloved head.

Ursus rushed for the wig, ruffled it, put it on, advanced softly, and holding his breath, placed his bristling head under Dea's hand.

Then calling all his art to his aid, and imitating Gwynplaine's voice, he sang with ineffable love the monster's response to the call of the spirit. The imitation was so perfect that again the gipsies looked around

for Gwynplaine, frightened at hearing without seeing him.

Govicum, filled with astonishment, stamped, applauded, clapped his hands, producing an Olympian tumult, and himself laughed as if he had been a chorus of gods. This boy, it must be confessed, developed a rare talent for personating an audience.

Fibi and Vinos, being automatons of which Ursus pulled the strings, rattled their instruments, the usual sign of the performance being over and of the departure of the people.

Ursus arose, covered with perspiration. He said, in a low voice, to Homo :—

“ You see it was necessary to gain time. I think we have succeeded. I have not acquitted myself badly, though I have as much reason to go distracted as any one. Gwynplaine will perhaps return to-morrow. It is useless to kill Dea directly. I can explain matters to you.”

He took off his wig and wiped his forehead.

“ I am a ventriloquist of genius,” murmured he. “ What talent I displayed ! I have equalled Brabant, the engastrimythist of Francis I., of France. Dea is convinced that Gwynplaine is here.”

“ Ursus,” said Dea, “ where is Gwynplaine ? ”

Ursus started and turned round. Dea was still standing at the back of the stage, alone under the lamp which hung from the ceiling. She was pale as a ghost.

With an ineffable expression of despair, she added :

“ I know. He has left us. He is gone. I always knew that he had wings.”

And raising her sightless eyes heavenward, she added :

“ When shall I follow him ? ”

CHAPTER III.

COMPLICATIONS.

URSUS was stunned.

He had not sustained the illusion.

Was it the fault of his ventriloquism? Certainly not. He had succeeded in deceiving Fibi and Vinos, who had eyes, although he had not deceived Dea, who was blind. It was because Fibi and Vinos saw with their eyes, while Dea saw with her heart. He could not utter a word. He thought to himself, *Bos in lingua*. The troubled man has an ox on his tongue.

Humiliation was the first of the many emotions which dawned upon him. Ursus, driven out of his last resource, pondered.

"I lavish my onomatopies in vain."

Then, like every dreamer, he reviled himself.

"What a frightful failure! I wore myself out in a pure loss of imitative harmony. What is to be done next?"

He looked at Dea. She was silent, and grew paler every moment, as she stood perfectly motionless. Her sightless eyes remained fixed in depths of thought.

Fortunately, something happened. Ursus saw Master Nieless in the yard, with a candle in his hand, beckoning to him.

Master Nieless had not assisted at the end of the phantom comedy played by Ursus. Some one had happened to knock at the door of the inn. Master

Nicless had gone to open it. There had been two knocks, and twice Master Nicless had disappeared. Ursus, absorbed by his hundred-voiced monologue, had not observed his absence.

On the mute call of Master Nicless, Ursus descended.

He approached the tavern-keeper. Ursus put his finger on his lips. Master Nicless put his finger on his lips.

The two looked at each other thus.

Each seemed to say to the other, "We will talk, but we will hold our tongues."

The tavern-keeper silently opened the door of the lower room of the tavern. Master Nicless entered. Ursus entered. There was no one there except these two. On the side looking on the street, both the doors and window-shutters were closed.

The tavern-keeper pushed the door to behind him in the face of the inquisitive Govicum.

Master Nicless placed the candle on the table.

A whispered dialogue began.

"Master Ursus?"

"Master Nicless?"

"I understand at last."

"Nonsense!"

"You wished that poor blind girl to think that everything was going on as usual."

"There is no law against my being a ventriloquist."

"You are a clever fellow."

"No."

"It is wonderful how you manage all that you wish to do."

"I tell you, it is not."

"Now, I have something to tell you."

"Is it about politics?"

"I don't know."

"Because in that case I could not listen to you."

"Look here ; while you were playing actors and audience by yourself, some one knocked at the door of the tavern."

"Some one knocked at the door?"

"Yes."

"I don't like that."

"Nor I, either."

"And then?"

"And then I opened it."

"Who was it that knocked?"

"Some one who spoke to me."

"What did he say?"

"I listened to him."

"What did you answer?"

"Nothing. I came back to see you play."

"And—?"

"Some one knocked a second time."

"Who—the same person?"

"No, another."

"Some one else to speak to you?"

"Some one who said nothing."

"I like that better."

"I do not."

"Explain yourself, Master Nicless."

"Guess who called the first time."

"I have no leisure to be an Œdipus."

"It was the proprietor of the circus."

"Over the way?"

"Over the way."

"Whence comes all that fearful music. Well?"

"Well, Master Ursus, he makes you a proposal."

"A proposal?"

"A proposal."

"Why?"

"Because —"

"You have an advantage over me, Master Nicless; just now you solved my enigma, and now I cannot understand yours."

"The proprietor of the circus commissioned me to tell you that he had seen the *cortége* of police pass this morning, and that he, the proprietor of the circus, wishing to prove that he is your friend, offers to buy of you, for fifty pounds, ready money, your van, the Green Box, your two horses, your trumpets, with the women that blow them, your play, with the blind girl who sings in it, your wolf, and yourself."

Ursus smiled a haughty smile.

"Inn-keeper, tell the proprietor of the circus that Gwynplaine is coming back."

The inn-keeper took something from a chair in the darkness, and turning towards Ursus with both arms raised, dangled from one hand a cloak, and from the other a leather collar, a felt hat, and a jacket.

And Master Nicless said, —

"The man who knocked the second time was connected with the police; he came in and handed me these things, then left without saying a word."

Ursus recognized in the articles, the collar, jacket, hat, and cloak of Gwynplaine.

CHAPTER IV.

MŒNIBUS SURDIS CAMPANA MUTA.

URSUS smoothed the felt hat, touched the cloth of the cloak, the serge of the coat, the leather of the collar, and no longer able to doubt whose garments they were, with a gesture at once hasty and imperative, and without saying a word, pointed to the door of the inn.

Master Nieless opened it.

Ursus rushed out of the tavern.

Master Nieless looked after him, and saw Ursus run as fast as his old legs would carry him, in the direction taken that morning by the wapentake who carried off Gwynplaine.

A quarter of an hour afterwards, Ursus, out of breath, reached the little street back of the Southwark jail, where he had already watched so many hours. This alley was lonely enough at all hours; but if dreary during the day, it was portentous at night. No one ventured through it after a certain hour. It seemed as though people feared that the walls would close in, and that if the prison or the cemetery took a fancy to embrace, any chance pedestrian would be crushed in their clasp. Such are the effects of darkness. The pollard willows of the ruelle Vauvert in Paris were equally feared. It is said that during the night the stumps of those trees changed into great hands, and caught hold of the passers-by.

As we have already mentioned, the Southwark folks instinctively shunned this alley between a prison and a

churchyard. In former times it had been barricaded during the night by an iron chain. Very unnecessarily, however, for the strongest chain which guarded the street was the terror it inspired.

Ursus entered it resolutely.

What object did he have in view? None.

He came into the alley to gain information, if possible.

Did he intend to knock at the gate of the jail? Certainly not. Such an expedient never once occurred to him. Did he hope to gain an entrance and ask an explanation? What arrant folly! Prisons do not open to those who wish to enter, any more than to those who desire to get out. Their hinges never turn except by law. Ursus knew this. Why, then, had he come here? To see. To see what? Nothing in particular. Even to be opposite the gate through which Gwynplaine had disappeared, was something.

Sometimes the blackest and most rugged of walls whispers, and some light escapes through a cranny. A vague glimmering is now and then visible through solid and sombre piles of building. Even to examine the envelope of a fact may be to some purpose. The instinct of us all is to leave between the fact which interests us and ourselves only the thinnest possible cover. Hence it was that Ursus hastened back to the alley in which the back entrance to the prison was situated.

Just as he entered it he heard one stroke of a bell, then a second.

"Hold," thought he; "can it be midnight already?"

He began to count mechanically.

"Three, four, five. At what long intervals this clock strikes!" he mused; "and how slowly! Six, seven!"

Then he remarked:—

"What a melancholy sound! Eight, nine! Still, nothing could be more natural; it's dull work for a

clock to live in a prison. Ten! Besides, there is the cemetery. This clock sounds the hour to the living, and eternity to the dead. Eleven! Alas! to strike the hour to him who is not free, is also to chronicle an eternity! Twelve!

He paused.

"Yes, it is midnight."

The clock struck a thirteenth stroke.

Ursus shuddered.

"Thirteen!"

Then followed a fourteenth; then a fifteenth.

"What can this mean?"

The strokes continued at long intervals. Ursus listened.

"It is not the striking of a clock; it is the bell Muta. No wonder I said, How long it takes to strike midnight. This clock does not strike; it tolls. What terrible thing is about to take place?"

Formerly all prisons, and all monasteries, had a bell called Muta, reserved for melancholy occasions. La Muta (the mute) was a bell which struck very low, as if trying its best not to be heard.

Ursus had reached the corner which he had found so convenient for his watch, and whence he had been able, during a great part of the day, to keep his eye on the prison.

The strokes followed each other at lugubrious intervals.

A knell makes an ugly punctuation in space. It breaks the preoccupation of the mind into gloomy paragraphs. A knell is like a man's death-rattle. If in the houses in the neighbourhood where a knell is tolled there are hopeful reveries floating about, the sound cuts them into rigid fragments. A vague reverie is a sort of refuge. Some indefinable diffuseness in anguish allows a ray of hope to penetrate it now and then. A knell is precise and deso-

lating. It concentrates this diffusion of thought, and precipitates the vapours in which anxiety seeks to remain in suspense. A knell speaks to each one in the sense of his own grief or of his own fear. Tragic bell! it concerns you. It is a warning to you. There is nothing so dreary as a soliloquy on which its cadence falls. The even returns of sound seem to show a purpose. What is it that this hammer, the bell, forges on the anvil of destiny?

Ursus counted, vaguely and aimlessly, the solemn strokes of the bell. Feeling that his thoughts were escaping his control, he made an effort not to let them merge into conjecture. Conjecture is an inclined plane, on which we slip too far. Still, what was the meaning of the bell?

He looked through the darkness in the direction in which he knew the gate of the prison to be.

Suddenly, in that very spot which looked like a dark hole, a redness appeared. The redness grew larger, and became a light.

There could be no doubt about it. It soon assumed a tangible form. The gate of the jail had just turned on its hinges and the glow illumined the arch and the jambs of the door. It was a yawning rather than an opening. A prison does not open; it yawns, — perhaps from *ennui*. Through the gate emerged a man with a torch in his hand.

The bell tolled on. Ursus felt his attention riveted upon two objects. With his eye, he watched the torch; with his ear, he watched the knell. Behind the first man the gate, which had been only ajar, suddenly opened wider, and allowed egress to two other men; then to a fourth. This fourth was the wapentake, clearly visible in the light of the torch. His iron staff was in his hand.

Following the wapentake, there filed out in order, from beneath the gateway, two by two, slowly and noiselessly a procession of silent men.

The torchlight revealed their faces and attitudes clearly, — fierce looks, sullen attitudes.

Ursus recognized the faces of the police who had carried off Gwynplaine that morning.

There was no doubt about it. They were the same men. They were reappearing.

Of course, Gwynplaine would also reappear. They had taken him to that place. They would bring him back again.

It was all quite clear.

Ursus strained his eyes to the utmost. Would they set Gwynplaine at liberty?

The long file of policemen flowed from the low arch slowly, and, as it were, drop by drop. The tolling of the bell continued, and seemed to mark their steps. On leaving the prison, the men turned their backs on Ursus, went to the right, towards the corner of the street opposite that at which he was posted.

A second torch shone under the gateway, denoting the end of the procession.

Ursus was about to see what they were bringing with them. The prisoner. The man.

Ursus was soon, he thought, to see Gwynplaine.

That which they carried appeared.

It was a bier.

Four men carried this bier, which was covered with black cloth.

Behind them came a man, with a shovel on his shoulder.

A third lighted torch, held by a man reading a book, probably the chaplain, closed the procession.

The bier followed the line of policemen, who had turned to the right.

The Funeral Procession.

Photo-Etching. — From Drawing by G. Rochegrosse.



Just at that moment the head of the procession stopped.

Ursus heard the grating of a key.

Opposite the prison, in the low wall which ran along the other side of the street, another opening was illuminated by a torch passing beneath it.

This gate, over which a death's head was placed, was the gate of the cemetery.

The wapentake passed through it, then the men, then the second torch. The procession disappeared within it, like a reptile entering his retreat.

The gate closed.

There was nothing left but a glimmer of light above the wall.

A muttering was heard; then some dull sounds, — made by the chaplain and the grave-digger, doubtless; one casting on the coffin some verses of Scripture, the other some clods of earth.

The muttering ceased; the dull sounds ceased. A stir was heard; the torches shone out again. The wapentake reappeared, holding his staff high in the air, under the re-opened gate of the cemetery; then the chaplain with his book, and the grave-digger with his spade emerged, followed by the rest of the *cortége*, without the coffin.

The files of men crossed over in the same order, with the same taciturnity, and in the opposite direction. The gate of the cemetery closed; that of the prison opened. The obscurity of the passage became vaguely visible; then the whole vision disappeared in the depths of shadow.

The knell ceased. All was locked in silence. A grim incarceration of shadows.

A vanished vision, — nothing more.

A passing of spectres, which had disappeared.

The logical arrangement of surmises constitutes some-

thing which at least resembles evidence. To the arrest of Gwynplaine, to the secret mode of his capture, to the return of his garments by the police officer, to the death knell at the prison to which he had been conducted, was now added a coffin carried to the grave.

“He is dead!” cried Ursus.

He sank down upon a stone.

“Dead! They have killed him! Gwynplaine! My child! My son!”

And he burst into passionate sobs.

CHAPTER V.

STATE POLICY DEALS WITH LITTLE MATTERS AS WELL
AS WITH GREAT.

URSUS, alas! had boasted that he had never wept. So his reservoir of tears was full. Such plenitude as is accumulated drop by drop, sorrow on sorrow, through a long existence, is not to be poured out in a moment. Ursus wept long.

The first tear is a letting out of waters. He wept for Gwynplaine, for Dea, for himself, Ursus, for Homo. He wept like a child. He wept like an old man. He wept for everything at which he had ever laughed. He paid off arrears. Man is never nonsuited when he pleads his right to tears.

The corpse they had just buried was Hardquanonne's; but Ursus could not know that.

The hours crept on.

Day began to break. The pale light of dawn overspread the bowling-green and shone upon the front of the Tadcaster Inn. Master Nicless had not gone to bed, for sometimes the same occurrence produces sleeplessness in many.

Troubles radiate in every direction. Throw a stone in the water, and count the ripples.

Master Nicless felt himself in danger. It is very disagreeable that such things should happen in one's house. Master Nicless, uneasy, and foreseeing misfortunes, meditated. He regretted having received such people into his

house. Had he but known that they would end by getting him into mischief! But the question was, how to get rid of them? He had given Ursus a lease. What a blessing if he could free himself from it. How should he set to work to drive them out?

Suddenly the door of the inn resounded with one of those tumultuous knocks which in England announces "Somebody." The gamut of knocking corresponds with the ladder of hierarchy.

It was not quite the knock of a lord; but it was the knock of a justice.

The trembling inn-keeper half opened the window. It was indeed a magistrate. Master Nicless perceived at the door a number of police officers, with two men, one of whom was the justice of the quorum, at their head.

Master Nicless had seen the justice of the quorum that morning, and recognized him.

He did not know the other, who was a fat gentleman, with a waxen-coloured face, a fashionable wig, and a travelling cloak.

Nicless was much afraid of the first of these persons, the justice of the quorum. Had he been of the court, he would have feared the other most, because it was Barkilphedro.

One of the subordinates knocked at the door again, violently this time.

The inn-keeper, with great drops of perspiration on his brow, opened it.

The justice of the quorum, in the tone of an important official personage who is accustomed to deal with all sorts of vagabonds, raised his voice, and asked severely for —

"Master Ursus!"

The host, cap in hand, replied, —

"He lives here, your honour."

"I know it," said the justice.

"No doubt, your honour."

"Tell him to come down."

"He is not here, your honour."

"Where is he?"

"I do not know."

"How is that?"

"He has not come in."

"Then he must have gone out very early?"

"No; he went out very late."

"What vagabonds!" replied the justice.

"Here he comes, your honour," said Master Nicless, softly.

Ursus, indeed, had just appeared in sight, around a turn of the wall. He was returning to the inn. He had passed nearly the whole night between the jail, where at midday he had seen Gwynplaine, and the cemetery, where at midnight he had heard the grave filled up.

Dawn, which is light in a chrysalis state, leaves even those forms which are in movement in the uncertainty of night. Ursus, wan and indistinct, walked slowly, like a man in a dream.

In the wild distraction produced by his agony of mind, he had left the inn with his head bare. He had not even found out that he had no hat on. His sparse grey locks fluttered in the wind. His open eyes appeared sightless. Often when we seem awake we are asleep, and as often when we seem asleep we are really awake.

Ursus looked like one demented.

"Master Ursus," cried the inn-keeper, "come; their honours desire to speak to you."

Master Nicless, in his endeavour to soften matters, let slip this plural, "their honours,"—respectful to the group, but mortifying, perhaps, to the chief, confounded thereby, to some degree, with his subordinates.

Ursus started like a man falling off a bed while he was sleeping soundly.

"What is the matter?" he asked.

He saw the police, with the justice at their head.

Another rude shock.

But a short time ago, the wapentake, now the justice of the quorum. He seemed to have been cast from one to the other, as ships are driven from reef to reef in old stories we have read.

The justice of the quorum motioned him to enter the tavern.

Ursus obeyed.

Govicum, who had just got up, and who was sweeping the room, stopped his work, got into a corner behind the tables, put down his broom, and held his breath. He plunged his fingers into his hair and scratched his head, a symptom which indicated profound attention to what was about to occur.

The justice of the quorum sat down on a bench, before a table. Barkilphedro took a chair. Ursus and Master Nicless remained standing. The police officers, left outside, grouped themselves in front of the closed door.

The justice of the quorum fixed his eye, full of the majesty of the law, upon Ursus, and said, —

"You have a wolf."

"Ursus answered, —

"Not exactly."

"You have a wolf," continued the justice, emphasizing "wolf" with a decided accent.

Ursus answered, —

"You see —"

And he was silent.

"A misdemeanour!" replied the justice.

Ursus hazarded an excuse: —

"He is my servant."

The justice placed his hand flat on the table, with his fingers spread out, which is a very fine gesture of authority.

"Merry-andrew! to-morrow, by this hour, you and your wolf must have left England. If not, the wolf will be seized, carried to the register office, and killed."

Ursus thought, "More murder!" but he breathed not a syllable, though he trembled in every limb.

"Do you hear?" said the justice.

Ursus nodded.

The justice persisted: —

"Killed."

There was silence.

"Strangled, or drowned."

The justice of the quorum watched Ursus.

"And you, yourself, cast into prison."

Ursus murmured, —

"Your worship!"

"Be off before to-morrow morning; if not, these orders will be carried out."

"Your worship!"

"What?"

"Must we leave England, he and I?"

"Yes."

"To-day?"

"To-day."

"What is to be done?"

Master Nicless was happy. The magistrate, whom he had so feared, had come to his aid. The police had acted as auxiliary to him, Nicless. They had delivered him from these people. The means he sought had been provided. Ursus, whom he wanted to get rid of, was being driven away by the police, — a superior authority. There was nothing to object to; on the contrary, he was delighted. He interrupted: —

"Your honour, that man —"

He pointed to Ursus with his finger.

"That man wants to know how he is to leave England to-day. Nothing could be easier. Night and day there are at anchor on the Thames, both on this and on the other side of London Bridge, vessels that sail to the continent. They go to Denmark, to Holland, to Spain; not to France, on account of the war, but everywhere else. Several ships will sail to-night, about one o'clock, which is the hour of high tide, and, among others, the 'Vograat' for Rotterdam."

The justice of the quorum made a movement of his shoulder towards Ursus.

"Be it so. Leave by the first ship, — by the 'Vograat.'"

"Your worship," said Ursus.

"Well?"

"Your worship, if I had, as formerly, only my little box on wheels, it might be done. A boat could carry that, but —"

"But what?"

"But now I have got the Green Box, which is a big van drawn by two horses, and however wide the ship might be, we could not get it aboard her."

"What is that to me?" said the justice. "The wolf will be killed, then."

Ursus shuddered, as if an icy hand had clutched his heart.

"Monsters!" he thought. "Murdering people is their way of settling matters."

The inn-keeper smiled, and addressed Ursus: —

"Master Ursus, you can sell the Green Box."

Ursus looked at Nicless.

"Master Ursus, you have an offer already, you recollect?"

"From whom?"

"An offer for the van, an offer for the two horses, an offer for the two gipsy-women, an offer —"

"From whom?" repeated Ursus.

"From the proprietor of the neighbouring circus."

Ursus remembered it.

"It is true."

Master Nicless turned to the justice of the quorum.

"Your honour, the bargain can be completed to-day. The proprietor of the circus close by wishes to buy the show and the horses."

"The proprietor of the circus is right," said the justice; "because he will soon require them. A van and horses will be useful to him. He, too, will depart to-day. The reverend gentlemen of the parish of Southwark have complained of the indecent riot in Tarrinzeau Field. The sheriff has taken measures accordingly. To-night there will not be a single juggler's booth in the place. There must be an end to all these scandals. The honourable gentleman who deigns to be here present —"

The justice of the quorum interrupted his speech to salute Barkilphedro, who returned the bow.

"The honourable gentleman who deigns to be present has just arrived from Windsor. He brings orders. Her Majesty has said, 'It must be swept away.'"

Ursus, during his long meditation all night, had not failed to ask himself some questions. After all, he had only seen a bier. Could he be sure that it contained Gwynplaine? Other people besides Gwynplaine might have died. A coffin does not announce the name of the corpse, as it passes by. A funeral had followed the arrest of Gwynplaine. That proved nothing. *Post hoc, non propter hoc*, etc. Ursus had begun to doubt.

Hope burns and glimmers over misery like naphtha over water. Its hovering flame ever floats over human sorrow. Ursus had come to this conclusion, "It is probable that it was Gwynplaine whom they buried, but it is

not certain. Who knows? — perhaps Gwynplaine is still alive.”

Ursus bowed to the justice.

“Honourable judge, I will leave, — we will all leave by the ‘Vograat,’ for Rotterdam, to-day. I will sell the Green Box, the horses, the trumpets, the gipsies. But I have a comrade whom I cannot leave behind, — Gwynplaine.”

“Gwynplaine is dead,” said a voice.

Ursus felt a chilly sensation like that produced by a reptile crawling over the skin. It was Barkilphedro who had just spoken.

The last gleam of hope was extinguished. There could be no doubt now. Gwynplaine was dead. A person in authority must know, and this one looked ill-favoured enough to be so.

Ursus bowed to him.

Master Nicless was a good-hearted man enough, but a dreadful coward. Once terrified, he became a brute. The greatest cruelty is that inspired by fear.

He growled out, —

“This simplifies matters.”

And standing behind Ursus, he began to rub his hands, a peculiarity of the selfish, signifying, “I am well out of it,” and suggestive of Pontius Pilate washing his hands.

Ursus, overwhelmed, bowed his head upon his breast.

The sentence on Gwynplaine had been executed: Death. His sentence was pronounced: Exile. Nothing remained but to obey. He felt like one in a dream.

Some one touched his arm. It was the other person who was with the justice of the quorum. Ursus shuddered.

The voice which had said, “Gwynplaine is dead,” whispered in his ear: —

"Here are ten guineas, sent you by one who wishes you well."

And Barkilphedro placed a little purse on a table before Ursus. We must not forget the casket that Barkilphedro had taken with him.

Ten guineas out of two thousand! It was all that Barkilphedro could make up his mind to part with. It was enough in all conscience. He had taken the trouble to find a lord; and having sunk the shaft, it was but fair that the first proceeds of the mine should belong to him. Those who see meanness in the act are right, but they are wrong to feel astonished. Barkilphedro loved money, especially stolen money. An envious man is always an avaricious one. Barkilphedro was not without his faults. The commission of crimes does not preclude the possession of vices. Tigers have lice as well as bats.

Besides, he belonged to the school of Bacon.

Barkilphedro turned towards the justice of the quorum, and said to him:—

"Sir, be so good as to conclude this matter. I am in haste. A carriage and horses belonging to her Majesty await me. I must go at full gallop to Windsor, for I must be there within two hours' time. I have information to give and orders to take."

The justice of the quorum arose.

He went to the door, which was only latched, opened it, and beckoned authoritatively to the police. They entered with that silence which heralds severity of action.

Master Nicless—satisfied with the rapid *dénouement* which cut short his difficulties—charmed to be out of the entangled skein, was afraid, when he saw the muster of officers, that they were going to arrest Ursus in his house. Two arrests—first that of Gwynplaine, then that of Ursus—would be injurious to the inn. Customers dislike police raids.

This, then, was the time for a respectful but generous appeal. Master Nicless turned towards the justice of the quorum a smiling face, in which confidence was tempered by respect.

"Your honour, I venture to observe to your honour that these honourable gentlemen, the police officers, might be dispensed with now that the wolf is about to be carried away from England, and that this man, Ursus, makes no resistance; and since your honour's orders are being promptly carried out, your honour will consider that the respectable presence of the police, so necessary to the good of the kingdom, does great harm to an establishment, and that my house is innocent. The merry-andrews of the Green Box having been swept away, as her Majesty says, there is no longer any criminal here, for I do not suppose that the blind girl and the two women are considered criminals; therefore, I implore your honour to deign to shorten your august visit, and to dismiss these worthy officers who have just entered, because there is nothing for them to do in my house; and, if your honour will permit me to prove the truth of my speech by means of an humble question, I will prove the uselessness of these respected gentlemen's presence by asking your honour, if the man Ursus obeys orders, and departs, who else can there be to arrest here?"

"Yourself," said the justice.

A man does not argue with a sword that runs him through and through. Master Nicless subsided, — he cared not on what, on a table, on a bench, on anything that happened to be there, — and lay there prostrate.

The justice raised his voice, so that if there were people outside, they might hear.

"Master Nicless Plumtree, keeper of this tavern, this is the last point to be settled. This mountebank and the wolf are vagabonds. They are driven away. But

the person most in fault is yourself. It is in your house, and with your consent, that the law has been violated; and you, a man licensed, invested with a public responsibility, have established this scandal here. Master Nicless, your license is taken away; you must pay the penalty, and go to prison."

The policemen surrounded the inn-keeper.

Pointing out Govicum, the justice continued, —

"Arrest that boy as an accomplice."

The hand of an officer fell upon the collar of Govicum, who looked at him inquisitively. The boy was not much alarmed, scarcely understanding the occurrence. Having observed so many strange things already, he wondered if this were the end of the comedy.

The justice of the quorum forced his hat down on his head, crossed his hands on his stomach, which is the height of majesty, and added, —

"It is decided, Master Nicless; you are to be taken to prison, and shut up, you and the boy; and this house, the Tadcaster Inn, is to remain condemned and closed for the sake of the example. Consequently, you will follow us."

BOOK VII.

THE TITANESS.

CHAPTER I.

THE AWAKENING.

AND Dea !
It seemed to Gwynplaine, as he watched the break of day at Corleone Lodge, while the things we have related were occurring at the Tadcaster Inn, that the call came from without — but it came from within.

Who has not heard the deep clamours of the soul ?

Moreover, the morning was dawning.

Aurora is a voice.

Of what use is the sun, if not to re-awaken that sleeper, — the conscience ?

Light and virtue are akin.

Whether the god be called Christ or Love, there is at times an hour when he is forgotten, even by the best. All of us, even the saints, require a voice to remind us, and the dawn speaks to us, like a sublime monitor. Conscience calls out before duty, as the cock crows before the dawn of day.

That chaos, the human heart, hears the *Fiat Lux* !

Gwynplaine — for so we will continue to call him ; Clancharlie is a lord, Gwynplaine is a man — Gwynplaine felt as if he had been brought back to life. It was time that the artery was bound up.

For awhile his virtue had spread its wings and flown away.

"And Dea!" he said.

Then he felt a generous transfusion through his veins. Something healthy and tumultuous rushed in upon him. The violent irruption of good thoughts is like the return home of a man who has not his key, and who forces his own lock honestly. It is a burglary; but a burglary of evil.

"Dea! Dea! Dea!" repeated he.

He strove to assure himself of his heart's strength. And he put the question with a loud voice, "Where are you?"

He almost wondered that no one answered him.

Again, gazing at the walls and the ceiling, with wandering thoughts, through which an occasional gleam of reason penetrated, he almost shouted, "Dea, where are you? Where am I?"

And in the chamber which was his cage, he began to walk excitedly to and fro, like a wild beast in captivity.

"Where am I? At Windsor; and you in Southwark. Alas! this is the first time that there has been distance between us. Who has dug this gulf. I here, thou there. Oh! it cannot be; it shall not be! What is this that they have done to me?"

He stopped.

"Who talked to me of the queen? What do I know about such things? *I* changed! Why? Because I am a lord. Do you know what has happened, Dea? You are a lady. What has come to pass is astounding. My business now is to get back into the right road. Who was it that led me astray? There was a man who spoke to me very mysteriously. I remember the words which he addressed to me: 'My lord, when one door opens, the

other shuts. That which you have left behind is no longer yours.' In other words, you are a coward. That man, the miserable wretch! said that to me before I was fairly awake. He took advantage of my first moment of astonishment. I was as it were an easy prey. Where is he that I may insult him? He spoke to me with the evil smile of a demon. But see, I am myself again. That is well. They deceive themselves if they think that they can do what they like with Lord Clancharlie, a peer of England. Yes, and with a peeress, for if I am a peer, Dea is a peeress. Conditions! Shall I accept them! The queen! What is the queen to me? I never saw her. I did not become a lord to be made a slave. I enter upon my position unfettered. Do they think they have unchained me for nothing? They have unmuzzled me. That is all. Dea! Ursus! we are one. What you were, I was. What I am, you are. Come to me. No. I will go to you at once — at once! I have already waited too long. What can they think, not seeing me return! That money! When I think I sent them that money! It was me that they wanted. I remember the man said that I could not leave this place. We will see about that. Here! a carriage, a carriage! Harness the horses. I am going to look for them. Where are the servants? I ought to have plenty of servants here as I am a lord. I am master here. This is my house. I will twist off the bolts, I will break the locks, I will kick down the doors, I will run my sword through the body of any one who bars my passage. I should like to see who will dare to stop me. I have a wife, and she is Dea. I have a father, who is Ursus. My house is a palace, and I give it to Ursus. My name is a diadem, and I give it to Dea. Yes, Dea, I am coming; yes, you may be sure that I shall soon stride across the intervening space!"

And raising the first piece of tapestry he came to, he rushed impetuously from the chamber.

He found himself in a corridor.

He went straight forward.

A second corridor opened before him.

All the doors were open.

He walked on at random, from chamber to chamber, from passage to passage, seeking an exit.

CHAPTER II.

THE RESEMBLANCE OF A PALACE TO A WOOD.

IN palaces built after the Italian fashion, and Corleone Lodge was one, there were very few doors, but abundance of tapestry screens and curtained doorways.

In every palace of that date there was a wonderful labyrinth of chambers and corridors, where luxury ran riot ; gilding, marble, carved wainscotting, Eastern silks ; nooks and corners, some secret and dark as night, others light and pleasant as the day. There were cosey nooks, richly and gaily furnished ; burnished recesses, shining with Dutch tiles and Portuguese azulejos. The thickness of the walls was such that there were rooms within them. Here and there were closets, nominally wardrobes. They were called "The Little Rooms." It was within them that many an evil deed was hatched.

When a Duke of Guise had to be killed, the pretty Présidente of Sylvecane abducted, or the cries of little girls brought thither by Lebel smothered, such places were very convenient for the purpose. They were labyrinthine chambers, impracticable to a stranger ; scenes of abductions ; wonderful aids to mysterious disappearances. In these elegant hiding-places, princes and lords stored their plunder. It was in such a place as this that the Count de Charolais hid Madame Courchamp, the wife of the Clerk of the Privy Council ; Monsieur de Monthulé, the daughter of Haudry, the farmer of la Croix Saint Lenfroy ; the Prince de Conti, the two beautiful baker women

of l'Ile Adam; the Duke of Buckingham, poor Pennywell, etc. The deeds done there were such as were designated by the Roman law as committed *vi, clam, et precario*, — by force, in secret, and for a short time. Once incarcerated, an occupant remained there till the master of the house decreed his or her release. They were gilded oubliettes, savouring both of the cloister and the harem. Their staircases twisted, turned, ascended, and descended. A zig-zag of rooms, one running into another, led back to the starting-point. A gallery terminated in an oratory. A confessional was grafted on to an alcove. Perhaps the architects of "the little rooms," built for royalty and aristocracy, took as models the ramifications of coral beds, and the openings in a sponge. The branches became a labyrinth. Pictures turning on false panels were exits and entrances. They were full of stage contrivances, and no wonder, considering the dramas that were played there. These hives reached from the cellar to the attic. Quaint madrepore inlaying every palace, from Versailles downwards, like cells of pygmies in dwelling-places of Titans. Passages, niches, alcoves, and secret recesses, — all sorts of nooks and corners, in which were secreted the meannesses of the great.

These narrow winding passages recalled games, blind-folded eyes, hands feeling in the dark, suppressed laughter, blind-man's-buff, hide-and-seek, while, at the same time, they suggested memories of the Atrides, of the Plantagenets, of the Medicis, of the brutal knights of Eltz, of Rizzio, of Monaldeschi, of naked swords, pursuing the fugitive flying from room to room.

The ancients, too, had mysterious retreats of the same kind, in which luxury was combined with enormities. The pattern has been preserved underground in some sepulchres in Egypt, notably in the tomb of King Psammetichus, discovered by Passalacqua. The ancient poets

have recorded the horrors of these suspicious buildings.
Error circumflexus. Locus implicitus gyris.

Gwynplaine was in "the little rooms" of Corleone Lodge. He was burning to be off, to get outside, to see Dea again. The maze of passages and alcoves, with secret and bewildering doors, checked and retarded his progress. He tried to run, — he was obliged to grope. He thought that he had but one door to thrust open, while he had a skein of doors to unravel. Room succeeded room. Then came a cross-passage, with rooms on each side.

Not a living creature was to be seen. He listened. Not a sound.

At times he thought that he must be returning towards his starting-point; then, that he saw some one approaching. It was no one. It was only the reflection of himself in a mirror, dressed as a nobleman. *That* he? — Impossible! He recognized himself, but not at once.

He explored every passage that he came to.

He examined the quaint arrangements of the rambling building, and their yet quainter adornings. Here, a cabinet, painted and carved in a sentimental, but immodest style; there an equivocal-looking chapel, studded with enamels and mother-of-pearl, with miniatures on ivory wrought out in relief, like those on old-fashioned snuff-boxes; here, one of those pretty Florentine retreats, adapted to the hypochondriasis of women, and even then called *boudoirs*. Everywhere — on the ceilings, on the walls, and on the very floors — were representations, in velvet or metal, of birds, of trees; of luxuriant vegetation, picked out in reliefs of lace-work; tables covered with ebony carvings, representing warriors, queens, and tritons armed with the scales of a hydra. Cut crystals combined prismatic effects with those of reflection. Mirrors reflected the light of precious stones, and

gold glittered in the darkest corners. It was impossible to say whether these many-sided, shining surfaces, where emerald green mingled with the golden hues of the rising sun, where a glimmer of ever-varying colours like those on a pigeon's neck floated, were miniature mirrors, or enormous beryls. A magnificence which was at once refined and stupendous reigned everywhere. If this was not a palace, it was the most gigantic of jewel-cases. A house for Mab, or a jewel for Geo.

Gwynplaine sought an exit but could find none. There is nothing so confusing as splendour seen for the first time. Moreover, this was a labyrinth. At each step he was stopped by some magnificent object which appeared to retard his exit, and to be unwilling to let him pass. He was encompassed by a network of wonders. He felt himself bound and held back.

"What a horrible palace!" he thought.

He wandered on through the maze, asking himself what it all meant—whether he was really in prison longing and thirsting for the fresh air. "Dea! Dea!" he repeated again and again as if that name was the thread of the labyrinth, and must be held unbroken, to guide him out of it.

Now and then he shouted:—

"Here, here, I say!"

No one answered.

There seemed to be no end to the rooms. All was deserted, silent, splendid, sinister. It realized the fables of enchanted castles. Hidden pipes of hot air maintained a summer temperature in the building. It was as if some magician had caught up the month of June and imprisoned it in a labyrinth. There were pleasant odours now and then, and he crossed currents of perfume, as though passing invisible flowers. It was warm. Carpets everywhere. One might have walked about there, unclothed.

Gwynplaine looked out of the windows. The view from each one was different. From one he beheld gardens, sparkling with the freshness of a spring morning; from another, a plot decked with statues; from a third, a patio in the Spanish style, a little square, flagged, mouldy, and cold. At times he saw a river—it was the Thames; sometimes a great tower—it was Windsor.

It was still so early that there were no signs of life without.

He stood still and listened.

“I will get out of this place,” said he. “I will return to Dea! They shall not keep me here by force. Woe to him who bars my exit. What is that great tower yonder? If there was a giant, a hell-hound, a minotaur, to guard the gates of this enchanted palace, I would annihilate him. If an army, I would exterminate it. Dea! Dea!”

Suddenly he heard a gentle noise, very faint. It was like dropping water. He was in a dark, narrow passage, closed, a few paces farther on, by a curtain. He advanced to the curtain, pushed it aside, and entered.

CHAPTER III.

EVE.

AN octagonal room, with a vaulted ceiling, without windows, but lighted by a skylight; walls, ceiling, and floors of peach-coloured marble; a black marble canopy, like a pall, with twisted columns in the solid but pleasing Elizabethan style, overshadowing a vase-like bath of the same black marble, — this was what he saw before him. In the centre of the bath arose a slender jet of tepid and perfumed water, which, softly and slowly, was filling the tank. The bath was black to augment fairness into brilliancy.

This was the water he had heard. A waste-pipe, placed at a certain height in the bath, prevented it from overflowing. Vapour was rising from the water; but not sufficiently to cause it to hang in drops on the marble. The slender jet of water was like a supple wand of steel, bending with the slightest current of air. There was no furniture, except a chair-bed with pillows, long enough for a woman to recline upon at full length, and yet have room for a dog at her feet. The French, indeed, borrow their word *canapé* from *can-al-pic*. This sofa was of Spanish manufacture. In it, silver took the place of woodwork. The cushions and coverings were of rich white silk.

On the other side of the bath, by the wall, was a lofty dressing-table of solid silver, furnished with every requisite for the toilet, having in the centre, in imitation of

a window, eight small Venetian mirrors, set in a silver frame. In a panel on the wall was a square opening, like a small window, which was closed by a door of solid silver. This door was fitted with hinges, like a shutter. On the door glittered a richly chased crown of gold. Over it, and affixed to the wall, was a bell, silver-gilt, if not of pure gold.

Opposite the entrance of the chamber, in which Gwynplaine stood as if transfixed, there was an opening in the marble wall, extending to the ceiling, and closed by a long, broad curtain of silver tissue.

This curtain, of fairy-like tenuity, was transparent, and did not obstruct the view. Through the centre of this web, where one might expect a spider, Gwynplaine saw a much more formidable object, — a naked woman.

Yet not quite naked; for she was covered — covered from head to foot. Her dress was a long chemise; so long that it floated over her feet, like the dresses of angels in holy pictures; but so fine that it seemed liquid. More treacherous and more perilous was this covering than naked beauty could have been. History has registered the procession of princesses and of great ladies between files of monks. Under pretext of naked feet and of humility, the Duchess de Montpensier showed herself to all Paris in a lace shift, with a wax taper in her hand.

The silver tissue, transparent as glass and fastened only at the ceiling, could be lifted aside. It separated the marble chamber, which was a bath-room, from the adjoining apartment, which was a bed-chamber. This tiny dormitory was as a grotto of mirrors. Venetian glasses, close together, mounted with gold, reflected on every side, the bed in the centre of the room. On the bed, which, like the toilet-table, was of silver, lay the woman; she was asleep.

She was sleeping with her head thrown back, one foot

peeping from its covering, like the Succuba, above whose heads dreams flap their wings.

Her lace pillow had fallen on the floor. Between her nakedness and the eye of the spectator were two obstacles, — her chemise and the curtain of silver gauze; two transparencies. The room, rather an alcove than a chamber, was only partially lighted by the reflection from the bath-room. Perhaps the light was more modest than the woman.

The bed had neither columns, nor daïs, nor top; so the woman, when she opened her eyes, could see herself reflected a thousand times in the mirrors above her head.

The crumpled bed-clothes bore evidence of troubled sleep. The beauty of the folds was proof of the quality of the material.

It was a period when a queen, thinking that she would be damned, pictured hell to herself as a bed with coarse sheets.

This fashion of sleeping partly undressed came from Italy, and was derived from the Romans. "*Sub clara nuda lacerna*," says Horace.

A dressing-gown of curious silk was thrown over the foot of the couch. It was apparently Chinese; for a great golden lizard was partly visible between the folds.

Beyond the couch, and probably concealing a door, was a large mirror, on which were painted peacocks and swans.

Shadow seemed to lose its nature in this apartment, and to glisten. The spaces between the mirrors and the gold work were lined with that sparkling material called in Venice thread of glass, — that is, spun glass.

At the head of the couch stood a reading-desk, on a movable pivot, with candles, and a book lying open, bearing this title, in large red letters: "*Alcoranus Mahumedis*."

But Gwynplaine saw none of these details. He had eyes only for the woman.

He was at once stupefied and filled with tumultuous emotions, — states apparently incompatible, yet sometimes co-existent.

He recognized her.

Her eyes were closed, but her face was turned towards him. It was the duchess.

She, the mysterious being in whom all the splendours of the unknown were united; she who had occasioned him so many unavowable dreams; she who had written him so strange a letter! The only woman in the world of whom he could say, "She has seen me, and she desires me!"

He had dismissed the dreams from his mind; he had burned the letter. He had, as far as lay in his power, banished the remembrance of her from his thoughts and dreams. He had ceased to think of her. He had forgotten her. He saw her again!

He saw her again, and found her terrible in her power.

His breath came in short catches. He felt as if he were in a storm-driven cloud. He looked. This woman before him! Could it be? At the theatre, a duchess; here, a nereid, a nymph, a fairy. Always an apparition.

He tried to fly, but realized the futility of the attempt. His eyes were riveted on the vision, as though he were spellbound.

Was she a woman? Was she a maiden? Both. Mes-salina was, perhaps, present, though invisible, and smiled, while Diana kept watch.

Over all her beauty was the radiance of inaccessibility. No purity could compare with her chaste and haughty form. Certain snows, which have never been touched, give an idea of it, — such as the sacred whiteness of the Jungfrau. That which was represented by that uncon-

scious brow; by that rich, dishevelled hair; by the drooping lids; by those blue veins, dimly visible; by the sculptured roundness of her bosom, her hips, and her knees, indicated by delicate undulations seen through the folds of her drapery, was the divinity of a queenly sleep. Immodesty was merged into splendour. She was as calm in her nakedness as if she had the right to a god-like effrontery. She felt the security of an Olympian, who knew that she was daughter of the gods, and might say to the ocean, "Father!" And she exposed herself, unattainable and proud, to everything that might pass,—to looks, to desires, to ravings, to dreams; as proud in her languor, on her boudoir couch, as Venus in the immensity of the sea-foam.

She had slept all night, and was prolonging her sleep into the daylight; her boldness, begun in shadow, continued in light.

Gwynplaine shuddered.

He admired her with an unhealthy and absorbing admiration, which ended in terror.

Misfortunes never come singly. Gwynplaine thought he had drained the cup of ill-luck to the dregs. Now it was refilled. Who could it be that was hurling all these thunder-bolts on his devoted head, and who had now placed before him, as he stood trembling there, a sleeping goddess? What! was the dangerous and desirable object of his dream lurking all the while behind these successive glimpses of heaven? Did these whispers of the mysterious tempter tend to inspire him with vague aspirations and confused ideas, and overwhelm him with an intoxicating series of realities proceeding from apparent impossibilities? Wherefore did all the shadows conspire against him, wretched man that he was! and what would become of him, with all those evil smiles of fortune beaming on him? Had this temptation been pre-arranged?

This woman, how and why was she there? No explanation! Had he been made a Peer of England expressly for this duchess? Who had brought them together? Who was the dupe? Who the victim? Whose simplicity was being abused? Was it God who was being deceived? All these undefined thoughts passed confusedly, like a flight of dark shadows, through his brain. That magical and malevolent abode, that strange and prison-like palace, was that also in the plot? Gwynplaine suffered a partial unconsciousness. Suppressed emotions threatened to strangle him. He was weighed down by an overwhelming force. His will became powerless. How could he resist?

This time he felt he was becoming irremediably insane. His headlong fall over the precipice of stupefaction continued.

But the woman slept on.

What aggravated the storm within him was, that he saw not the princess, not the duchess, not the lady, — but the woman.

Deviations from right exist in man, in a latent state. There is an invisible tracery of vice, ready prepared, in our organizations. Even when we are innocent, and apparently pure, it exists within us. To be stainless, is not to be faultless. Love is a law. Desire is a snare. There is a great difference between getting drunk once, and habitual drunkenness. To desire a woman, is the former; to desire women, the latter.

Gwynplaine, losing all self-command, trembled.

What could he do against such a temptation? Here were no skilful effects of dress, no silken folds, no complex and coquettish adornments, no affected exaggeration of concealment or of exhibition, no cloud. It was nakedness in fearful simplicity, — a sort of mysterious summons, the shameless audacity of Eden. The whole of the

dark side of human nature was there. Eve, worse than Satan; the human and the superhuman commingled. A perplexing ecstasy, winding up in a brutal triumph of instinct over duty. The sovereign contour of beauty is imperious. When it leaves the ideal and condescends to be real, its proximity is fatal to man.

Now and then the duchess moved softly on the bed, with the vague movement of a cloud in the heavens, changing as a vapour changes its form, composing and decomposing the charming curves of her body. Woman is as supple as water; and, like water, this one impressed an observer with the idea that it would be impossible to grasp her.

Absurd as it may appear, though he saw her there in the flesh before him, yet she seemed a chimera; and, palpable as she was, she seemed to him afar off. He listened to her breathing, and fancied he heard only a phantom's respiration. He was attracted, though against his will. How was he to arm himself against her—or against himself?

He had been prepared for everything except this danger. A savage door-keeper, a raging monster of a jailer—such were his expected antagonists. He had looked for Cerberus, he found Hebe.

A sleeping woman! What an opponent!

He closed his eyes. Too bright a light blinds the eyes. But through his closed eyelids there penetrated at once the woman's form,—not so distinct, but beautiful as ever.

Fly! Easier said than done. He had already tried and failed. He was rooted to the ground, as if in a dream. When we try to draw back, temptation clogs our feet, and glues them to the earth. We can still advance; but to retire is impossible. The invisible arms of sin rise from below and drag us down.

There is a common-place idea, accepted by nearly every one, that feelings become blunted by experience. Nothing can be more untrue. You might as well say that by dropping nitric acid slowly on a sore it would heal and become sound, and that torture dulled the sufferings of Damiens. The truth is, that each fresh application intensifies the pain. By reason of successive surprises, Gwynplaine had become desperate. That cup, his reason, overflowed under this new stupor. He felt within him a terrible awakening. Compass he no longer possessed. One idea only was before him,—the woman. An indescribable happiness appeared, which threatened to overwhelm him. He was no longer able to decide for himself. There was an irresistible current and a reef. The reef was not a rock, but a siren; a magnet at the bottom of the abyss. He wished to tear himself away from this magnet,—but how was he to carry out his wish? He had ceased to feel any basis of support. Who can foresee the fluctuations of the human mind? A man may be wrecked, as well as a ship. Conscience is an anchor. It is a terrible thing, but, like the anchor, conscience may be carried away.

He had not even the chance of being repulsed on account of his terrible disfigurement. The woman had written to say that she loved him.

In every crisis there is a moment when the scale hesitates before kicking the beam. When we lean to the worst side of our nature, instead of strengthening our better qualities, the moral force which has been preserving the balance gives way, and down we go. Had this critical moment in Gwynplaine's life arrived?

How could he escape?

So it is she! the duchess! the woman! There she was in that lonely room,—asleep, far from succour, helpless, alone, at his mercy,—yet he was in her power!

The duchess!

We have, perchance, observed a star in the distant firmament. We have admired it. It is so far off. What can there be to make us shudder in a fixed star? Well, one day — one night, rather — it moves. We perceive a trembling gleam around it. The star which we imagined to be immovable, is in motion. It is no longer a star, but a comet, — the incendiary giant of the skies. The luminary moves on, grows bigger, shakes off a shower of sparks and fire, and becomes enormous. It advances towards us. Oh, horror! it is coming our way! The comet recognizes us, marks us for its own, and will not be turned aside. Irresistible attack of the heavens! What is it that is bearing down upon us? An excess of light, which blinds us; an excess of life, which kills us. That proposal which the heavens make we refuse; that unfathomable love we reject. We close our eyes; we hide; we tear ourselves away; we imagine the danger is past. We open our eyes: the formidable star is still before us; but, no longer a star, it has become a world, — a world unknown, a world of lava and ashes; the devastating prodigy of space. It fills the sky, allowing no competitors. The carbuncle of the firmament's depths, the diamond in the distance, when it nears us becomes a seething furnace. You are caught in its flames.

Yet the first sensation of burning is that of a heavenly warmth.

CHAPTER IV.

SATAN.

SUDDENLY the sleeper awoke. She raised herself with a sudden and gracious dignity of movement, her fair silken tresses falling in soft disorder on her hips; her loosened night-dress disclosing her shoulder. She touched her pink toes with her little hand, and gazed for some moments on the naked foot, worthy to be worshipped by Pericles, and copied by Phidias; then stretching herself, she yawned like a tigress in the rising sun.

Perhaps Gwynplaine breathed heavily, as we often do when we endeavour to restrain our respiration.

“Is any one there?” said she.

She yawned as she spoke, and her very yawn was graceful.

Gwynplaine listened to the unfamiliar voice, — the voice of a charmer, its accents exquisitely haughty, its caressing intonation softening its native arrogance.

Then rising on her knees, — there is an antique statue kneeling thus in the midst of a thousand transparent folds, — she drew her dressing-gown towards her, and springing from the couch, stood upright by it, — nude; then, suddenly, with the swiftness of an arrow’s flight, she was clothed. In a twinkling of an eye the silken robe was around her. The trailing sleeve concealed her hands; only the tips of her toes, with little pink nails like those of an infant, were left visible.

Having drawn from underneath the dressing-gown a mass of hair which had been imprisoned by it, she crossed behind the couch to the end of the room, and placed her ear to the painted mirror, which was, apparently, a door.

Tapping on the glass with her finger, she called, —

“Is any one there? Lord David? Are you come already? What time is it, then? Is that you, Barkilphedro?”

She turned from the glass.

“No! it was not there. Is there any one in the bath-room? Will you answer? Of course not. No one could come that way.”

Going to the silver lace curtain, she raised it with her foot, thrust it aside with her shoulder, and entered the marble room.

An agonized numbness fell upon Gwynplaine. There was no possibility of concealment now. It was too late to fly. Moreover, he was no longer equal to the exertion. He wished that the earth would open and swallow him up. Anything to hide him.

She saw him.

She stared, immensely astonished, but without the slightest nervousness. Then, in a tone of mingled pleasure and contempt, she said, —

“Why, it is Gwynplaine!”

Suddenly, with a rapid spring, for this cat was a panther, she flung herself on his neck. She clasped his head between her naked arms, from which the sleeves, in her eagerness, had fallen back.

Suddenly, pushing him from her, and holding him by both shoulders with her small but powerful hands, she stood up face to face with him, and began to gaze at him with a strange expression.

It was a fatal glance she gave him with her Aldebaran-

like eyes, — a glance at once equivocal and star-like. Gwynplaine gazed at the blue eye and the black eye, distracted by the double ray of heaven and of hell that shone in the orbs thus fixed on him. The man and the woman threw a malign dazzling reflection one on the other. Both were fascinated, he by her beauty, she by his deformity. Both were in a measure awe-stricken. Pressed down as by an overwhelming weight, he was speechless.

“Oh!” she cried. “How clever you are! You are come. You found out that I was obliged to leave London. You followed me. That was right. Your being here proves you to be a wonder.”

The simultaneous return of self-possession acts like a flash of lightning. Gwynplaine, indistinctly warned by a vague, rude, but honest misgiving, drew back, but the pink nails clung to his shoulders and restrained him. Some inexorable power proclaimed its sway over him. He, a wild beast himself, was caged in a wild beast's den.

She continued, —

“Anne, the fool, you know whom I mean — the queen — ordered me to Windsor without giving any reason. When I arrived she was closeted with her idiot of a chancellor. But how did you contrive to obtain access to me? That's what I call being a man! Obstacles, indeed! There are no such things! My name, the Duchess Josiana, you knew, I fancy. Who was it brought you in? No doubt it was the page. Oh, he is clever! I will give him a hundred guineas. Which way did you get in? Tell me! No! don't tell me. I don't want to know. Explanations diminish interest. I prefer the marvellous, and you are hideous enough to be marvellous. You may have fallen from high heaven, or you may have risen from the depths of hell through the devil's trap-door. Nothing could be more natural. The

ceiling opened or the floor yawned. A descent in a cloud, or an ascent in a mass of fire and brimstone, that is the way you travelled. You have a right to enter like the gods, for are you not my lover?"

Gwynplaine listened bewildered, his will becoming more irresolute every moment. Any further doubt was impossible. That letter! this woman confirmed its statements. Gwynplaine the lover and the beloved of a duchess! Mighty pride, with its thousand baleful heads, stirred his wretched heart.

Vanity, that powerful factor within us, works us measureless evil.

The duchess went on:—

"As you are here, it must have been decreed. I ask nothing more. There must be some one in heaven, or in hell, who brings us together. The betrothal of Styx and Aurora! The very first day I saw you, I said, 'It is he! I recognize him. He is the monster of my dreams. He shall be mine.' We have to give destiny a helping hand. Therefore I wrote to you. One question, Gwynplaine, — do you believe in predestination? For my part, I have believed in it ever since I read Scipio's dream, in Cicero. Ah! I did not observe it before. Dressed like a gentleman! You in fine clothes! Why not? You are a mountebank. All the more reason. A juggler is as good as a lord. Moreover, what are lords? Clowns. You have a noble figure, you are magnificently made. It is wonderful that you should be here. When did you arrive? How long have you been here? I am beautiful, am I not? I was just going to take my bath. Oh, how I love you! You read my letter! Did you read it yourself or did some one read it to you? Can you read? Probably you are ignorant. I ask all these questions, but you need n't answer them. I don't like the sound of your voice. It is too soft. An extraordinary creature

like you should snarl, not speak. You sing harmoniously. I hate it. It is the only thing about you that I do not like. Everything else about you is grand and terrible. In India you would be a god. Were you born with that frightful laugh on your face? No! No doubt it is a penal brand. I do hope you have committed some crime. Come to my arms!"

She sank on the couch and made him sit beside her. They found themselves close together. What she said passed over Gwynplaine like a mighty storm. He hardly understood the meaning of the whirlwind of words. Her eyes were full of admiration. She spoke tumultuously, frantically, with a voice at once broken and tender. Her words were music; but their music affected Gwynplaine like a hurricane. Again she fixed her gaze upon him, and continued:—

"I feel degraded in your presence, and oh, what happiness that is! How insipid it is to be a grandee! What can be more tiresome? Disgrace is a comfort. I am so satiated with respect that I long for contempt. We are all a little erratic, from Venus, Cleopatra, Mesdames de Chevreuse and de Longueville down to myself. I will make a display of you, I declare I will. Here's a love affair which will be a blow to my family, the Stuarts. Ah, I breathe again! I have discovered a secret. I am clear of royalty. To be free from its trammels is indeed deliverance. To break down, defy, make and destroy at will,—that is true enjoyment. Listen—I love you!"

She paused; then resumed, with a smile:—

"I love you, not only because you are deformed, but because you are low. I love monsters, and I love mountebanks. A lover despised, mocked, grotesque, hideous, exposed to laughter on that pillory called the stage, has an extraordinary attraction for me. It is a taste of the fruit of hell. A base-born lover, how exquisite! To

taste the apple, not of paradise, but of hell,—what a temptation! It is for that I hunger and thirst. I am an Eve,—an Eve of the depths. Probably you are, unbeknown to yourself, a devil. I am in 'love with a nightmare. You are the incarnation of infernal mirth. You are the master I require. I wanted a lover like Medea's and Canidia's. I felt sure that some night would bring me such an one. You are just what I want. I am talking of a heap of things you probably know nothing about. Gwynplaine, hitherto I have remained untouched; I give myself to you, pure as a burning ember. You evidently do not believe me; but if you only knew how little I care!"

Her words flowed like a volcanic eruption. Pierce Mount Etna, and you may obtain some idea of that jet of fiery eloquence.

"Madam —" stammered Gwynplaine.

But she placed her hand on his lips.

"Silence," she said. "I am studying you. I, myself, am a vestal bacchante. No man has known me, and I might be the virgin pythoness at Delphos, and have under my naked foot the bronze tripod, where the priests lean their elbows on the skin of the python, whispering questions to the invisible god. My heart is of stone, but it is like one of those mysterious pebbles which the sea washes up on the foot of the rock called Huntly Nabb, at the mouth of the Tees, and which if broken are found to contain a serpent. That serpent is my love,—a love which is all-powerful, for it has brought you to me. An impassable gulf was between us. I was in Sirius, and you were in Allioth. But you have crossed the immeasurable space, and here you are. 'Tis well. Be silent. Take me."

She ceased; he trembled. Then she continued, smiling:

"You see, Gwynplaine, to dream is to create; to desire

is to summon. To build up the chimera is to provoke the reality. The all-powerful and terrible mystery will not be defied. You are here. Do I dare to lose caste? Yes. Do I dare to be your mistress, your concubine, your slave, your chattel? Joyfully. Gwynplaine, I am a woman. Woman is clay longing to become mire. I want to despise myself. That lends a zest to pride. The alloy of greatness is baseness. They combine perfectly. Despise me, you who are yourself despised. Nothing could be better. Degradation on degradation. What joy! I pluck the double blossom of ignominy. Trample me under foot. You will only love me the more. I am sure of it. Do you understand why I idolize you? Because I despise you. You are so immeasurably beneath me that I place you on an altar. Bring the highest and lowest depths together, and you have Chaos, and I delight in Chaos, — Chaos which is the beginning and end of everything. What is Chaos? A huge blot. Out of that blot God made light; and out of what was left, the world. You don't know how perverse I can be. Knead a star in mud, and you will have my likeness."

Thus spoke the siren, her loosened robe revealing her virgin bosom.

She went on:—

"A wolf to all besides; a faithful dog to you. How astonished they will all be! The astonishment of fools is amusing. I understand myself. Am I a goddess? Amphitrite gave herself to the Cyclops. 'Fluctivoma Amphitrite.' Am I a fairy? Urgele gave herself to Bugryx, a winged man, with eight webbed hands. Am I a princess? Marie Stuart had Rizzio. Three beauties, three monsters. I am greater than they, for you are lower than they. Gwynplaine, we were made for each other. The monster that you are outwardly, I am within. Hence my love for you. A caprice? Precisely.

What is a hurricane but a caprice? Our stars have a certain affinity. Together we are creatures of night, — you in face, I in mind. My mind is as deformed as your face. You come, and my real nature shows itself. I did not know it. It is astonishing. Your coming has evoked the hydra in me, who thought I was a goddess. You show me my real nature. See how much I resemble you. I did not know I was so terrible. So I too am a monster. Oh, Gwynplaine, you do amuse me!”

She laughed a strange, childlike laugh; and putting her mouth close to his ear, whispered, —

“Do you want to see a mad woman? Look at me.”

She poured her searching eyes into Gwynplaine's. A look is the most potent of philtres. Her loosened robe provoked a thousand dangerous emotions. Blind, animal ecstasy was invading his mind, ecstasy combined with agony.

While she was speaking, though he felt her words like burning coals, his blood froze within his veins. He had not strength to utter a word.

She stopped, and looked at him.

“O monster!” she cried. She grew wild.

Suddenly she seized his hands.

“Gwynplaine, I am the throne; you are the footstool. Let us meet on the same level. Oh, how happy I am in my fall! I wish all the world could know how abject I am become. It would bow down all the lower. The more man abhors, the more does he cringe. It is human nature. Hostile, but reptile; dragon, but worm. Oh, I am as depraved as were the gods! They cannot say that I am not a king's daughter, for I act like a queen. Who was Rhodope but a queen who loved Pteh, a man with a crocodile's head? She erected the third pyramid in his honour. Penthesilea loved the centaur who is now the star called Sagittarius. And what do you think of Anne

of Austria? Mazarin was ugly enough! Now, you are not only ugly, but hideous. Ugliness is insignificant, deformity is grand. Ugliness is a devil's grin behind beauty; deformity is akin to sublimity. Olympus has two aspects, — one, by day, shows Apollo; the other, by night, shows Polyphemus. You! you are a Titan. You would be Behemoth in the forests, Leviathan in the deep, and Typhon in the sewer. You surpass everything. There is the trace of lightning in your deformity; your face has been battered by the thunder-bolt. The jagged contortion of forked lightning has imprinted its mark on your face. It struck you and passed on. A mighty and mysterious wrath has, in a fit of passion, cemented your spirit in a terrible and superhuman form. Hell is a penal furnace, where the iron called Fatality is raised to a white heat. You have been branded with it. To love you, is to understand grandeur. I enjoy that triumph. To be in love with Apollo, a fine effort, forsooth! Glory is to be measured by the astonishment it creates. I love you! I have dreamt of you night after night. This is my palace. You shall see my gardens. There are fresh springs under the shrubs, arbours for lovers, and beautiful groups of marble statuary by Bernini. Flowers! there are too many; during the spring the place is on fire with roses. Did I tell you that the queen is my sister? Do what you like with me. I was made for Jupiter to kiss my feet, and for Satan to spit in my face. What is your religion? I am a Papist. My father, James II., died in France, surrounded by Jesuits. I have never felt before as I feel now that I am with you. Oh, how I should like to pass the evening with you, in the midst of music, both reclining on the same cushion, under a purple awning, in a gilded gondola on the broad expanse of ocean. Insult me, beat me, kick me, cuff me, treat me like a brute! I adore you!"

Caresses can roar. If you doubt it, observe the lion's. The woman was terrible, and yet full of grace. The effect was tragical. First he felt the claw, then the velvet of the paw. A feline attack, made up of advances and retreats. There was death as well as sport in this game of come and go. She idolized him, but arrogantly. The result was a contagious frenzy. Fatal language, at once inexpressible, violent, and sweet. The insulter did not insult; the adorer outraged the object of adoration. She, who buffeted, deified him. Her tones imparted to her violent yet amorous words an indescribable Promethean grandeur.

According to Æschylus, in the orgies in honour of the great goddess, the women were smitten by this same evil frenzy when they pursued the satyrs under the stars. Such paroxysms raged in the mysterious dances in the grove of Dodona. This woman was transfigured, — if, indeed, we can term that transfiguration which is the antithesis of heavenly. Her hair quivered like a mane; her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. The sunshine of the blue eye mingled with the fire of the black one. She was unearthly in her loveliness.

Gwynplaine felt himself vanquished by the deep subtilty of this attack.

“I love you!” she cried.

And she stung him with a kiss.

Homeric clouds were, perhaps, about to be required to encompass Gwynplaine and Josiana, as they did Jupiter and Juno. For Gwynplaine to be loved by a woman who could see, and who saw him; to feel on his deformed mouth the pressure of divine lips, was exquisite and maddening. In the presence of this woman, so full of enigmas, everything else faded away in his mind. The remembrance of Dea still struggled in the shadows but weakly. There is an antique bas-relief representing the

Sphinx devouring a Cupid. The wings of the sweet celestial are bleeding between the fierce, grinning fangs.

Did Gwynplaine love this woman? Has man, like the earth, two poles? Are we, on our inflexible axis, a moving sphere, — a star when seen from afar, mud, when seen more closely, in which night alternates with day? Has the heart two sides, — one on which love is poured forth in light, the other in darkness; here upon a divinity of light, there upon a creature of the slums? Angels are necessary. Is it possible that demons are also essential? Has the soul the wings of the bat? Does twilight fall fatally for all? Is sin an integral and inevitable part of our destiny? Must we accept evil as a part and portion of our whole? Do we inherit sin as a debt? What awful subjects for thought!

Yet a voice tells us that weakness is a crime. Gwynplaine's feelings are not to be described. The flesh, life, terror, lust, an overwhelming intoxication of spirit, and all the shame possible to pride. Was he about to succumb?

She repeated, "I love you!" and flung her frenzied arms around him. Gwynplaine panted for breath.

Suddenly, a little bell close by, rang out clearly and distinctly. It was the little bell on the wall. The duchess, turning her head, exclaimed petulantly, —

"What can she want of me?"

The silver panel, with the golden crown embossed on it, opened.

The end of a shaft, lined with royal blue velvet, appeared; and, on a golden salver, a letter.

The letter, which was broad and bulky, was so placed as to exhibit the seal, which was a large impression in red wax. The bell continued to tinkle. The open panel almost touched the couch where the duchess and Gwynplaine were sitting.

Leaning over, but still keeping her arm round his neck, she took the letter from the plate, and touched the panel.

The compartment closed, and the bell ceased ringing.

The duchess broke the seal, and opening the envelope, drew out the two documents contained therein, and flung it on the floor at Gwynplaine's feet.

The impression of the broken seal was still decipherable, and Gwynplaine could distinguish a royal crown over the initial A.

The torn envelope lay open before him, so that he could read, "To her Grace the Duchess Josiana."

The envelope had contained both vellum and parchment. The former was a small, the latter a large, document. On the parchment was a large Chancery seal in green wax.

The face of the duchess, whose bosom was palpitating, and whose eyes were swimming with passion, became overspread with a slight expression of dissatisfaction.

"Ah!" she said. "What has she sent to me? A lot of papers! What a spoil-sport the woman is!"

Throwing aside the parchment, she opened the vellum.

"It is her handwriting. It is my sister's hand. It is quite provoking. Gwynplaine, I asked you if you could read. Can you?"

Gwynplaine nodded assent.

She stretched herself at full length on the couch, carefully drawing her feet and arms under her robe, with a whimsical affectation of modesty, and giving Gwynplaine the vellum, watched him with an impassioned look.

"You are mine. Begin your duties, my beloved. Read me what the queen writes."

Gwynplaine took the vellum, unfolded it, and in a voice tremulous with conflicting emotions, began to read:—

MADAM, — We are graciously pleased to send to you herewith, sealed and signed by our trusty and well-beloved William Cowper, Lord High Chancellor of England, a copy of a report, setting forth the very important fact that the legitimate son of Linnæus, Lord Clancharlie has just been discovered and recognized, bearing the name of Gwynplaine, in the lowest ranks of life, among vagabonds and mountebanks. His false position dates from his earliest childhood. In accordance with the laws of the country, and in virtue of his hereditary rights, Lord Fermain Clancharlie, son of Lord Linnæus, will be this day admitted, and installed in his position in the House of Lords. Therefore, having regard to your welfare, and wishing to preserve for your use the property and estates of Lord Clancharlie of Hunkerville, we substitute him in the place of Lord David Dirry-Moir, and recommend him to your good graces. We have caused Lord Fermain to be conducted to Corleone Lodge. We will and command, as sister and as queen, that the said Fermain Lord Clancharlie, hitherto called Gwynplaine, shall be your husband, and that you shall marry him. Such is our royal pleasure.

While Gwynplaine, in tremulous tones which varied at almost every word, was reading the document, the duchess, half risen from the couch, listened with fixed attention. When Gwynplaine finished, she snatched the letter from his hands.

"*Anne R.*," she murmured in a tone of abstraction.

Then picking up the parchment she had thrown aside, she ran her eye over it. It was the confession of the shipwrecked crew of the "*Matutina*," embodied in a report signed by the sheriff of Southwark and by the Lord Chancellor.

Having perused the report, she read the queen's letter over again. Then she said: "Be it so." And calmly pointing with her finger to the door of the gallery through which he had entered, she added: "Begone!"

Gwynplaine sat as if petrified.

"As you are to be my husband, begone!" she repeated in icy tones.

Then as Gwynplaine, speechless, and with eyes downcast like a criminal, remained motionless, she added, —

"You have no right to be here; it is my lover's place."

Gwynplaine was like a man transfixed.

"Very well," said she, "then I must go myself. So you are to be my husband. Nothing could be better. I hate you!"

She rose, and with an indescribably haughty gesture of adieu, left the room. The curtain in the doorway leading to the gallery fell behind her.

CHAPTER V.

THEY RECOGNIZE, BUT DO NOT KNOW, EACH OTHER.

GWYNPLAINE was alone.

The confusion in his mind had reached its culminating point. His thoughts no longer resembled thoughts. They overflowed and ran riot; it was the anguish of a creature wrestling with perplexity. He felt as if he were waking from a horrible nightmare. The entrance into unknown spheres is no simple matter.

From the time he had received the duchess's letter, brought by the page, a series of surprising adventures had befallen Gwynplaine, each one less intelligible than the other. Up to this time, though in a dream, he had seen things clearly. Now he could only grope his way. He no longer thought, or even dreamed. He collapsed.

He sank down upon the couch which the duchess had vacated.

Suddenly, he heard a sound of footsteps, — the footsteps of a man. The noise came from the opposite side of the gallery from that by which the duchess had departed. The man approached, and his footsteps, though softened by the carpet, were clear and distinct. Gwynplaine, in spite of his abstraction, listened.

Suddenly, beyond the silver web of curtain which the duchess had left partly open, a door, evidently concealed by the painted glass, opened wide, and there came floating into the room the refrain of an old French song, carolled at the top of a manly and joyous voice, —

“Trois petits goretts sur leur fumier
Juraient comme de porteurs de chaise,”

and a man entered. He had a sword at his side, wore a magnificent naval uniform, covered with gold lace, and held in his hand a plumed hat with loops and cockade.

Gwynplaine sprang up erect, as if moved by springs. He recognized the man, and was in turn recognized by him.

From their astonished lips came, simultaneously, this double exclamation, —

“Gwynplaine !”

“Tom-Jim-Jack !”

The man with the plumed hat advanced towards Gwynplaine, who stood with folded arms.

“What are you doing here, Gwynplaine ?”

“And you, Tom-Jim-Jack, what are you doing here ?”

“Oh, I understand. Josiana ! a caprice. A mountebank and a monster ! The double attraction was too powerful to be resisted. So you disguised yourself in order to get here, Gwynplaine ?”

“And you, too, Tom-Jim-Jack ?”

“Gwynplaine, what does this gentleman’s dress mean ?”

“Tom-Jim-Jack, what does that officer’s uniform mean ?”

“Gwynplaine, I answer no questions.”

“Neither do I, Tom-Jim-Jack.”

“Gwynplaine, my name is not Tom-Jim-Jack.”

“Tom-Jim-Jack, my name is not Gwynplaine.”

“Gwynplaine, I am in my own house.”

“And I, too, am in my own house, Tom-Jim-Jack.”

“I will not have you echo my words. You are ironical ; but I’ve got a cane. Cease your jokes, you wretched fool.”

Gwynplaine became ashy pale.

"You are a fool yourself, and you shall give me satisfaction for this insult."

"Yes, in your booth with fisticuffs."

"No, here, and with swords!"

"My friend, Gwynplaine, the sword is a weapon for gentlemen. I can only fight my equals with it. At fisticuffs we are equal; but not so with swords. At the Tadeaster Inn, Tom-Jim-Jack could box with Gwynplaine. At Windsor, the case is very different. Understand this; I am a rear-admiral."

"And I am a Peer of England."

The man whom Gwynplaine knew as Tom-Jim-Jack burst out laughing.

"Why not a king? Indeed, you are right. An actor plays every part. You'll tell me next that you are Theseus, Duke of Athens."

"I am a Peer of England, and we are going to fight."

"Gwynplaine, this is growing tiresome. Don't play with one who can order you to be flogged. I am Lord David Dirry-Moir."

"And I am Lord Clancharlie."

Again Lord David burst out laughing.

"Well said! Gwynplaine, Lord Clancharlie! That is indeed the name the man must bear who is to win Josiana. Listen, I forgive you; would you know the reason? It's because we are both lovers of the same woman."

The curtain of the door was lifted, and a voice exclaimed, —

"You are the two husbands, my lords."

They turned.

"Barkilphedro!" cried Lord David.

It was indeed he. He bowed low to the two lords, with a smile on his face.

Some few paces behind him was a gentleman with a stern and dignified countenance, who carried a black

wand in his hand. This gentleman advanced, and bowing three times to Gwynplaine, said, —

“ I am the Usher of the Black Rod. I am come to fetch your lordship, in obedience to her Majesty’s commands.”

BOOK VIII.

THE CAPITOL AND THINGS AROUND IT.

CHAPTER I.

ANALYSIS OF MAJESTIC MATTERS.

IRRESISTIBLE Fate which had for so many hours showered its surprises on Gwynplaine, and which had transported him to Windsor, now transported him back to London.

Startling realities succeeded each other without a moment's intermission. He could not escape their influence. He was freed from one, only to encounter another. He had scarcely time to breathe.

Any one who has seen a juggler throwing and catching balls can judge the nature of fate. Those rising and falling projectiles are like men tossed in the hands of Destiny, — mere playthings.

On the evening of the same day Gwynplaine was an actor in an extraordinary scene. He was seated on a bench covered with *fleurs-de-lis*; over his silken clothes he wore a robe of crimson velvet, lined with white silk, with a cape of ermine, and on his shoulders two bands of ermine embroidered with gold. Around him were men of all ages, young and old, seated like him on benches covered with *fleurs-de-lis*, and dressed like him in ermine and velvet. In front of him other men were kneeling, clothed in black silk gowns. Some of them were writ-

ing; opposite, and a short distance from him, he observed steps, a raised platform, a daïs, a large escutcheon glittering between a lion and a unicorn, and at the top of the steps, on the platform under the daïs, resting against the escutcheon, was a gilded chair with a crown over it. This was the throne.

The throne of Great Britain.

Gwynplaine, himself a Peer of England, was in the House of Lords. How Gwynplaine's introduction to the House of Lords came about, we will now explain.

Throughout the entire day, from morning until night, from Windsor to London, from Corleone Lodge to Westminster Hall, he had, step by step, mounted higher in the social grade. At each step he grew giddier.

He had been conveyed from Windsor in a royal carriage with a peer's escort. There is not much difference between a guard of honour, and a prisoner's. On that day travellers on the London and Windsor road saw a galloping cavalcade of gentlemen pensioners of her Majesty's household, escorting two carriages drawn at a rapid pace. In the first carriage sat the Usher of the Black Rod, his wand in his hand. In the second could be seen a large hat with white plumes, casting into shadow and hiding the face underneath it. Who was it who was being thus hurried on — a prince? a prisoner?

It was Gwynplaine.

It looked as if they were conducting some one to the Tower, unless, indeed, they were escorting him to the House of Lords. The queen had done things well. As it was for her future brother-in-law, she had provided an escort from her own household. The officer of the Usher of the Black Rod rode on horseback at the head of the cavalcade. The Usher of the Black Rod carried, on a cushion placed on a seat of the carriage, a black portfolio, stamped with the royal crown.

At Brentford, the last relay before London, the carriages and escort halted.

A four-horse carriage of tortoise-shell, with two postilions, a coachman in a wig, and four footmen, was in waiting. The wheels, steps, springs, pole, and all the fittings of this carriage were gilt. The horses' harness was of silver.

This state coach was of ancient and extraordinary shape, and would have been distinguished by its grandeur among the fifty-one celebrated carriages of which Roubo has left us drawings.

The Usher of the Black Rod and his officer alighted. The latter, having lifted the cushion on which the royal portfolio rested from the seat in the post-chaise, held it on outstretched hands, and stood behind the Usher, who first opened the door of the empty carriage, then the door of that occupied by Gwynplaine, and, with downcast eyes, respectfully invited him to descend.

Gwynplaine left the chaise, and took his seat in the carriage.

The Usher carrying the rod, and the officer supporting the cushion, followed, and took their places on the low front seat provided for pages in old state coaches. The inside of the carriage was lined with white satin, with tufts and tassels of silver. The roof was painted with armorial bearings. The postilions of the chaises they were leaving were dressed in the royal livery. The attendants of the carriage they now entered wore a different but very magnificent livery.

Gwynplaine, in spite of his bewildered state, noticed the gorgeously attired footmen, and asked the Usher of the Black Rod:—

“Whose livery is that?”

He answered,—

“Yours, my lord.”

The House of Lords was to sit that evening. *Curia erat serena*, run the old records. In England, parliamentary work is by preference undertaken at night. It once happened that Sheridan began a speech at midnight and finished it at sunrise.

The two post-chaises returned to Windsor. Gwynplaine's carriage set out for London.

This highly ornamented four-horse carriage proceeded at a walk from Brentford to London, as befitted the dignity of the bewigged coachman. Gwynplaine's slavery to ceremony was beginning in the shape of his solemn-looking coachman. The delay was, moreover, apparently pre-arranged; and we shall see its probable motive presently.

Night was falling, though it was not quite dark, when the carriage stopped at the King's Gate, — a large sunken door between two turrets, connecting Whitehall with Westminster. The escort of gentlemen pensioners formed a circle around the carriage. A footman jumped down from behind it and opened the door.

The Usher of the Black Rod, followed by the officer carrying the cushion, got out of the carriage, and addressed Gwynplaine: —

"My lord, be pleased to alight. I beg your lordship to keep your hat on."

Gwynplaine wore under his travelling cloak the suit of black silk, which he had not changed since the previous evening. He had no sword. He left his cloak in the carriage. Under the archway of the King's Gate there was a small side door, raised a few steps above the ground. In ceremonial processions the greatest personage never walks first.

The Usher of the Black Rod, followed by his officer, walked first; Gwynplaine followed. They ascended the steps, and entered by the side door. Presently they

reached a wide, circular room, with a pillar in the centre, — the lower part of a turret. The room, being on the ground-floor, was lighted by narrow lancet windows, which served only to make darkness visible. Twilight often lends solemnity to a scene. Obscurity is in itself majestic.

In this room, thirteen men, disposed in ranks, were standing; three in the front row, six in the second row, and four behind. One man in the front row wore a crimson velvet gown; the other two, gowns of the same colour, but of satin. All three had the arms of England embroidered on their shoulders. The second rank wore tunics of white silk, each one having a different coat-of-arms emblazoned in front. The men in the last row were clad in black silk, and were distinguished thus: the first wore a blue cape; the second had a St. George embroidered in scarlet upon his breast; the third, two embroidered crimson crosses, one in front and one behind; the fourth wore a collar of black sable fur. All were uncovered, wore wigs, and carried swords. Their faces were scarcely visible in the dim light, neither could they see Gwynplaine's face.

The Usher of the Black Rod, raising his wand, said:

"My Lord Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville, I, the Usher of the Black Rod, first officer of the presence chamber, hand your lordship over to Garter King-at-Arms."

The person clothed in velvet, quitting his place in the ranks, bowed to the ground before Gwynplaine, and said, —

"My Lord Fermain Clancharlie, I am Garter, Principal King-at-Arms of England. I am the officer appointed and installed by his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, hereditary Earl Marshal. I have sworn obedience to the king, peers, and knights of the garter. The day of my installa-

tion, when the Earl Marshal of England anointed me by pouring a goblet of wine on my head, I solemnly promised to be attentive to the nobility; to avoid bad company; to excuse, rather than accuse, gentlefolks; and to assist widows and virgins. It is I who have the charge of arranging the funeral ceremonies of peers, and the supervision of their armorial bearings. I place myself at the orders of your lordship."

The first of those wearing the satin tunics, having bowed deeply, said, —

"My lord, I am Clarenceaux, Second King-at-Arms of England. I am the officer who arranges the obsequies of nobles below the rank of peers. I am at your lordship's disposal."

The other wearer of the satin tunic, bowed, and spoke thus: —

"My lord, I am Norroy, Third King-at-Arms of England. Command me."

The second row, erect and without bowing, advanced a pace. The right-hand man said, —

"My lord, we are the six Dukes-at-Arms of England. I am York."

Then each of the heralds, or Dukes-at-Arms, speaking in turn, proclaimed his title: —

"I am Lancaster."

"I am Richmond."

"I am Chester."

"I am Somerset."

"I am Windsor."

The coats-of-arms embroidered on their breasts were those of the counties and towns from which they took their names.

The third rank, dressed in black, remained silent. Garter King-at-Arms, pointing them out to Gwynplaine, said, —

"My lord, these are the four Pursuivants-at-Arms. Blue Mantle."

The man with the blue cape bowed.

"Rouge Dragon."

He with the St. George inclined his head.

"Rouge Croix."

He with the scarlet crosses saluted.

"Portcullis."

He with the sable fur collar made his obeisance.

At a sign from the King-at-Arms, the first of the pursuivants, Blue Mantle, stepped forward and received from the officer of the Usher the cushion of silver cloth, and crown-emblazoned portfolio. And the King-at-Arms said to the Usher of the Black Rod:—

"Proceed; I leave the introduction of his lordship in your hands!"

The observance of these customs, and also of others which will be described hereafter, were the old ceremonies in use prior to the time of Henry VIII., and which Anne for some time attempted to revive. There is nothing like them in existence now. Nevertheless, the House of Lords thinks that it is unchangeable; and, if Conservatism exists anywhere, it is there.

It changes, nevertheless. *E pur si muove.*

For instance, what has become of the May-pole, which the citizens of London erected on the 1st of May, when the peers went down to the House? The last one was erected in 1713. Since then the May-pole has disappeared.

Outwardly, unchangeable; inwardly, mutable. Take, for example, the title of Albemarle. It sounds eternal. Yet it has been through six different families,—Odo, Mandeville, Bethune, Plantagenet, Beauchamp, Monck. Into the title of Leicester, five different names have been merged,—Beaumont, Breose, Dudley, Sydney, Coke.

Into Lincoln, six; into Pembroke, seven. The families change under unchanging titles. A superficial historian believes in immutability. In reality, it does not exist. Man can never be more than a wave; humanity is the ocean.

Aristocracy is proud of what women consider a reproach, — age! Yet both cherish the same illusion, — that they do not change.

It is probable the House of Lords will not recognize itself in the foregoing description, nor yet in that which follows, thus resembling the once pretty woman, who objects to having any wrinkles. The mirror is ever a scapegoat, yet its truths cannot be contested.

To portray exactly, constitutes the duty of an historian.

The King-at-Arms, turning to Gwynplaine, said, —

“Be pleased to follow me, my lord.”

And he added, —

“You will be saluted. Your lordship, in returning the salute, will be pleased merely to raise the brim of your hat.”

They moved off, in procession, towards a door at the farther end of the room. The Usher of the Black Rod walked in front; then Blue Mantle, carrying the cushion; then the King-at-Arms; and after him Gwynplaine, wearing his hat. The rest, kings-at-arms, heralds, and pursuivants, remained in the circular room.

Gwynplaine, preceded by the Usher of the Black Rod, and escorted by the King-at-Arm, passed from room to room, in a direction which it would now be impossible to trace, the old houses of Parliament having been pulled down.

Among others, he crossed that Gothic state-chamber in which the last meeting of James II. and Monmouth took place, and whose walls witnessed the useless humiliation of the cowardly nephew at the feet of his vin-

dictive uncle. On the walls of this chamber hung, in chronological order, nine full-length portraits of former peers, with their dates, — Lord Nansladron, 1305; Lord Baliol, 1306; Lord Benestede, 1314, Lord Cantilupe, 1356; Lord Montbegon, 1357; Lord Tibotot, 1373; Lord Zouch of Codnor, 1615; Lord Bella-Aqua, with no date; Lord Harren and Surrey, Count of Blois, also without date.

It being dark now, lamps were burning at intervals in the galleries. Brass chandeliers, with wax candles, illuminated the rooms, lighting them like the side aisles of a church.

None but officials were present.

In one room, which the procession crossed, stood the four clerks of the signet, and the Clerk of the Council, with heads respectfully bowed.

In another room stood the distinguished Knight Banneret, Philip Sydenham, of Brympton, in Somersetshire. The Knight Banneret is a title conferred in time of war, under the unfurled royal standard.

In another room was the senior baronet of England, Sir Edmund Bacon, of Suffolk, heir of Sir Nicholas Bacon, styled, *Primus baronetorum Anglia*. Behind Sir Edmund was an armour-bearer with an arquebus, and an esquire carrying the arms of Ulster, the baronets being the hereditary defenders of the province of Ulster in Ireland.

In another room was the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with his four accountants, and the deputies of the Lord Chamberlain.

At the entrance of a corridor covered with matting, which connected the Lower and the Upper House, Gwynplaine was saluted by Sir Thomas Mansell, of Margam, Comptroller of the Queen's Household and Member for Glamorgan; and at the exit from the corridor by a deputation of one for every two of the Barons of the Cinque

Ports, four on the right and four on the left, the Cinque Ports being eight in number. William Hastings did obeisance for Hastings; Matthew Aylmor, for Dover; Josias Burchett, for Sandwich; Sir Philip Boteler, for Hythe; John Brewer, for New Rumney; Edward Southwell, for the town of Rye; James Hayes, for Winchelsea; George Nailor, for Seaford.

As Gwynplaine was about to return the salute, the King-at-Arms reminded him in a low voice of the etiquette.

“Only the brim of your hat, my lord.”

Gwynplaine did as directed.

He now entered the so-called Painted Chamber, in which there were no paintings, except a few pictures of saints, Saint Edward among them, in the high arches of the long and deep-pointed windows, which were cut in two by a platform that formed the ceiling of Westminster hall and the floor of the Painted Chamber.

On the further side of the wooden barrier which divided the room from end to end, stood the three Secretaries of State, men of mark. The functions of the first of these officials comprised the supervision of all affairs relating to the south of England, Ireland, the Colonies, France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Turkey. The second had charge of the north of England, and watched affairs in the Low Countries, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Russia. The third, a Scot, had charge of Scotland. The two first mentioned were English, one of them being the Honourable Robert Harley, Member for the borough of New Radnor. A Scotch member, Mungo Graham, Esquire, a relation of the Duke of Montrose, was present. All bowed, without speaking, to Gwynplaine, who returned the salute by touching his hat.

The door-keeper lifted the wooden rail which barred

the entrance to the other side of the Painted Chamber, where stood the long table, covered with green cloth, reserved for peers. An immense candelabrum was on the table. Gwynplaine, preceded by the Usher of the Black Rod, Garter King-at-Arms, and Blue Mantle, penetrated into this privileged compartment. The gate-keeper closed the opening immediately Gwynplaine had passed. The King-at-Arms, having entered the precincts of the privileged compartment, halted.

The Painted Chamber was a spacious apartment. At the farther end, beneath the royal escutcheon which was placed between the two windows, stood two old men, in red velvet robes trimmed with ermine, and gold lace on their shoulders, and wearing wigs, and hats with white plumes. Through the openings of their robes one caught a glimpse of silken garments and sword-hilts.

Motionless behind them stood a man dressed in black silk, holding on high a great mace of gold surmounted by a crowned lion.

It was the Mace-bearer of the Peers of England.

The lion is their crest. "*Et les Lions ce sont les Barons et li Per,*" runs the manuscript chronicle of Bertrand Duguesclin.

The King-at-Arms pointed out the two persons in velvet, and whispered to Gwynplaine :—

"My lord, these are your equals. Be pleased to return their salute exactly as they make it. These two peers are barons, and have been named by the Lord Chancellor as your sponsors. They are very old, and almost blind. They will introduce you to the House of Lords. The first is Charles Mildmay, Lord Fitzwalter, sixth on the roll of barons; the second is Augustus Arundel, Lord Arundel of Trerice, thirty-eighth on the roll of barons."

The King-at-Arms having advanced a step towards the two old men, proclaimed :—

“Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie, Baron Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone, in Sicily, greets your lordships!”

The two peers raised their hats as high as they could reach and then replaced them.

Gwynplaine did the same.

The Usher of the Black Rod stepped forward, followed by Blue Mantle and Garter King-at-Arms. The Mace-bearer took up his position in front of Gwynplaine, the two peers at his side, Lord Fitzwalter on the right, and Lord Arundel of Trerice on the left. Lord Arundel, the elder of the two, was very feeble. He died the following year, bequeathing to his grandson John, a minor, the title, which became extinct in 1768.

The procession, leaving the Painted Chamber, entered a gallery supported by pilasters, and in the arches thus formed, were stationed guards,—English pike-men and Scottish halberdiers alternately. The Scotch halberdiers were magnificent looking soldiers, worthy to contend later on, at Fontenoy, with the French cavalry, and the royal cuirassiers, whom their colonel addressed thus: “Messieurs les maitres, assurez vos chapeaux. Nous allons avoir l’honneur de charger.”

The captain of these soldiers saluted Gwynplaine, and the peers, his sponsors, with their swords. The men saluted with their pikes and halberds.

At the end of the gallery shone a large door, so magnificent that it seemed to be a mass of gold. On each side of the door stood the door-keepers, erect and motionless.

Just before you came to this door, the gallery widened out into a large circular space. In this space stood an arm-chair with an immense back, and upon it, judging by his wig and from the amplitude of his robes, sat a highly distinguished personage. It was William Cowper, Lord Chancellor of England.

To be able to cap a royal infirmity with a similar one has its advantages. William Cowper was short-sighted. Anne was also troubled with defective vision, but in a lesser degree. The near-sightedness of William Cowper found favour in the eyes of the short-sighted queen, and induced her to appoint him Lord Chancellor, and Keeper of the Royal Conscience. William Cowper's upper-lip was thin, and his lower one thick, — a sign of tolerable good-nature.

This circular space was lighted by a lamp hung from the ceiling. The Lord Chancellor was sitting gravely in his large arm-chair; at his right was the Clerk of the Crown, and at his left the Clerk of Parliament.

Each of the clerks had before him an open register and an ink-horn.

Behind the Lord Chancellor was his mace-bearer, holding the mace with the crown on the top, besides his train-bearer and purse-bearer in large wigs.

All these offices are still in existence. On a little stand, near the wool-sack, was a sword, with a gold hilt and sheath, and belt of crimson velvet.

Behind the Clerk of the Crown was an officer holding in his hands the coronation robe.

Behind the Clerk of Parliament another officer held a second robe, which was that of a peer.

The robes, both of scarlet velvet, lined with white silk, and having bands of ermine edged with gold lace over the shoulders, were alike, except that the ermine band was wider on the coronation robe.

The third officer, who was the librarian, carried on a square of Flanders leather, the red book, — a little volume bound in red morocco, containing a list of the peers and commons, besides a few blank leaves and a pencil, which it was the custom to present to each new member upon entering the House.

Gwynplaine, between the two peers, his sponsors, brought up the end of the procession, which stopped before the wool-sack.

The two peers, who introduced him, uncovered their heads, and Gwynplaine did likewise.

The King-at-Arms, on receiving from the hands of Blue Mantle the cushion of silver cloth, knelt down, and presented the portfolio on the cushion to the Lord Chancellor.

The Lord Chancellor took the portfolio, and handed it to the Clerk of Parliament.

The Clerk received it ceremoniously, and then sat down.

The Clerk of Parliament then opened the portfolio, and arose.

The portfolio contained the two usual messages, — the royal patent addressed to the House of Lords, and the writ of summons.

The Clerk read these two messages aloud, with respectful deliberation, standing the while.

The writ of summons, addressed to Fermain Lord Clancharlie, concluded with the usual formalities: —

“We strictly enjoin you, by the faith and allegiance that you owe, to come and take your place in person among the prelates and peers sitting in our Parliament at Westminster, for the purpose of giving your advice, in all honour and conscience, on the business of the kingdom and of the Church.”

The reading of the message being concluded, the Lord Chancellor raised his voice: —

“The message of the Crown has been read. Lord Clancharlie, does your lordship renounce transubstantiation, adoration of saints, and the Mass?”

Gwynplaine bowed.

“The test has been administered,” said the Lord Chancellor.

And the Clerk of Parliament resumed, —

“His lordship has taken the test.”

The Lord Chancellor added, —

“My Lord Clancharlie, you can now take your seat.”

“So be it,” said the two sponsors.

The King-at-Arms rose, took the sword from the stand, and buckled it round Gwynplaine’s waist.

“Ce faict,” says the old Norman charter, “le pair prend son espée et monte aux hauts sièges, et assiste a l’audience.”

Gwynplaine heard a voice behind him, saying: —

“I array your lordship in a peer’s robe.”

At the same time, the officer who spoke to him, and who was holding the robe, placed it on him, and tied the strings of the ermine cape round his neck.

Gwynplaine, with the scarlet robe on his shoulders, and the golden sword by his side, was now attired like the peers to the right and left of him.

The librarian presented the red book to him, and put it in his waistcoat pocket.

The King-at-Arms murmured in his ear: —

“My lord, on entering, will bow to the royal chair.”

The royal chair is the throne.

Meanwhile the two clerks were writing, each at his table, — one in the register of the Crown; the other in the register of the House.

Then both — the Clerk of the Crown preceeding the other — brought their books to the Lord Chancellor, who signed them. Having signed the two registers, the Lord Chancellor rose.

“Fermain Lord Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie, Baron Hunkerville, Marquis of Corleone in Sicily, be welcome among your peers, the lords spiritual and temporal, of Great Britain.”

Gwynplaine’s sponsors touched his shoulder.

He turned round.

The double portals of the great gilded door at the end of the gallery opened.

It was the door of the House of Lords.

Only thirty-six hours had elapsed since Gwynplaine, surrounded by a very different retinue, entered the iron door of Southwark jail.

What wild chimeras had passed, with terrible rapidity, through his brain ! Chimeras which were facts ; rapidity which amounted to a capture by assault.

CHAPTER II.

IMPARTIALITY.

THE creation of an equality with the king called the peerage, was, in barbarous epochs, a useful fiction. This rudimentary political expedient produced in France and England entirely different results however. In France, the peer was a mock king; in England, a real prince, — less pretentious than in France, but more genuine.

This so-called peerage originated in France; the date is uncertain, — under Charlemagne, says the legend; under Robert le Sage, says history; and history is no more to be relied on than legend. Favin writes: "The King of France wished to attach to himself the great of his kingdom, by the magnificent title of peers, as if they were his equals."

Peerage soon thrust forth branches, and from France passed over to England.

The English peerage has been a great and almost a mighty institution. It had for precedent the Saxon witenagemot. The Danish thane and the Norman vavasour commingled in the baron. Baron is the same as vir, which is translated into Spanish by *varon*, and which signifies, *par excellence*, "Man." As early as 1075, the barons made their power felt by the king — and by what king? By no less a personage than William the Conqueror. In 1086 they laid the foundation of feudality, and its basis was the "Doomsday Book."

Under John Lackland came conflict. The French peerage undertook to carry things with a high hand with Great Britain, and demanded that the King of England should appear at their Bar. Great was the indignation of the English barons. At the coronation of Philip Augustus, the King of England, as Duke of Normandy, carried the first square banner, and the Duke of Guyenne, the second. Against this king, a vassal of the foreigner, the War of the Barons burst forth. The barons wrested from the weak-minded King John the Magna Charta, from which sprung the House of Lords. The pope sided with the king, and excommunicated the Lords. The date was 1215, and the pope was Innocent III., who wrote the "Veni Sancte Spiritus," and who sent to John Lackland the four cardinal virtues in the shape of four gold rings. The Lords persisted. The conflict continued through many generations. Pembroke struggled valiantly. 1248 was the year of "the provisions of Oxford." Twenty-four barons limited the king's powers, censured him, and called upon a knight from each county to take part in the widened breach. This was the beginning of the House of Commons. Later on, the Lords added two citizens from each city, and two burgesses from each borough. The result of this was that, up to the time of Elizabeth, the peers were judges of the validity of elections to the House of Commons. From their jurisdiction sprang the proverb that the members returned must be without the three P's—*sine Prece, sine Pretio, sine Poculo*. This did not obviate rotten boroughs however. In 1293, the Court of Peers in France still had the King of England under their jurisdiction, and Philippe le Bel cited Edward I. to appear before him. Edward I. was the king who ordered his son to boil him down after death, and to carry his bones to the wars. The follies of their kings

made the Lords feel the necessity of strengthening Parliament. They divided it into two chambers, the upper and the lower. The Lords arrogantly maintained the supremacy. "If it happens that any member of the Commons should be so bold as to speak to the prejudice of the House of Lords, he is called to the bar of the House to be reprimanded, and, sometimes, to be sent to the Tower." There is the same distinction in voting. In the House of Lords they vote one by one, beginning with the junior, called the *puisne* baron. Each peer answers "Content," or "Not content." In the Commons they vote together, by "Ay," or "No," in a crowd. The Commons accuse, the peers judge. The peers, in their contempt for figures, delegated to the Commons, who were to profit by it, the superintendence of the Exchequer, so called, according to some, after the table-cover, which was like a chess-board, and according to others, from the drawers of the old safe, where the treasure of the kings of England was kept behind an iron grating. The "Year-Book" dates from the end of the thirteenth century. In the War of the Roses, the influence of the Lords was thrown, now on the side of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, now on the side of Edmund, Duke of York. Wat Tyler, the Lollards, Warwick, the king-maker, all the anarchy from which freedom was to spring, had for its real or pretended foundation, the English feudal system. The Lords were usefully jealous of the Crown; for to be jealous is to be watchful. They circumscribed the royal prerogatives, diminished the category of cases of high treason, raised up pretended Richards against Henry IV., appointed themselves arbitrators, decided the question of the three crowns between the Duke of York and Margaret of Anjou, levied armies if necessary, and fought the battles of Shrewsbury, Tewkesbury, and St. Albans, sometimes

winning, sometimes losing. Before this, in the thirteenth century, they had gained the battle of Lewes, and had driven from the kingdom the four brothers of the king, bastards of Queen Isabella by the Count de la Marche; all four usurers, who extorted money from Christians by means of the Jews; half princes, half sharpers, — a thing common enough in more recent times, but not regarded with favour in those days. Up to the fifteenth century the Norman duke peeped out in the King of England, and the acts of Parliament were written in French. From the reign of Henry VII., by the will of the Lords, these were written in English. England, Briton under Uther Pendragon; Roman under Cæsar; Saxon under the Heptarchy; Danish under Harold; Norman after William, then became, thanks to the Lords, English. After that she became Anglican. To have a home religion is a great advantage. A foreign pope drags down the national life. A Mecca is an octopus that devours it. In 1534, London bowed Rome out. The peerage adopted the reformed religion, and the Lords accepted Luther. Here we have the answer to the excommunication of 1215. It was agreeable to Henry VIII.; but in other respects the Lords were a trouble to him. As a bulldog to a bear, so was the House of Lords to Henry VIII. When Wolsey robbed the nation of Whitehall, and when Henry robbed Wolsey of it, who complained? Four Lords, — Darcie of Chichester; Saint John, of Bletsho; and (two Norman names) Mountjoie and Mouteagle. The king encroached, the peerage protested. There is something in hereditary power which is incorruptible. Hence the insubordination of the Lords. Even in Elizabeth's reign the barons were restless. From this resulted the tortures at Durham. Elizabeth assembled Parliament as rarely as possible, and reduced the House of Lords to sixty-five

members, among whom there was but one marquis (Winchester), and not a single duke. In France the kings felt the same jealousy, and carried out the same elimination. Under Henry III. there were not more than eight dukedoms in the peerage; and it was to the great annoyance of the king that the Baron de Mantes, the Baron de Coucy, the Baron de Coulommiers, the Baron de Chateauneuf-en-Thimerais, the Baron de la Fère-en-Tardenois, the Baron de Mortagne, and several others, persisted in declaring themselves barons,—peers of France. In England, the Crown saw the peerage diminish with pleasure. Under Anne, to quote but one example, the peerages which had become extinct since the twelfth century amounted to five hundred and sixty-five. The War of the Roses began the extermination of dukes, which the axe of Mary Tudor completed. There was a wholesale decapitation of the nobility. Good policy, perhaps; but it is better to corrupt than to decapitate,—at least, James I. was of this opinion. He restored dukedoms. He made a duke of his favourite Villiers,—a change from the feudal duke to the courtier duke. This sowing was to bring forth a rank harvest: Charles II. made two of his mistresses duchesses,—Barbara of Southampton and Louise de la Querouel of Portsmouth. Under Anne there were twenty-five dukes, of whom three were foreigners, Cumberland, Cambridge, and Schomberg. Did this court policy, invented by James I., succeed? No. The House of Peers was incensed by this effort to shackle it. It was incensed against James I., it was incensed against Charles I., who may have had something to do with the death of his father, just as Marie de Medicis may have had something to do with the death of her husband. There was a rupture between Charles I. and the peerage. The Lords who, under James I., had tried at their bar,

extortion, in the person of Bacon, under Charles I. tried treason, in the person of Strafford. They had condemned Bacon,—they condemned Strafford. One had lost his honour, the other lost his life. Charles I. was first beheaded in the person of Strafford. The Lords lent their aid to the Commons. The king convened Parliament in Oxford, the revolution convened it in London. Forty-three peers sided with the king, twenty-two with the Republic. From this union of the people with the Lords arose the Bill of Rights, — a sketch of the French *Droits de l'homme* ; a vague shadow flung back from the depths of futurity by the revolution of France on the revolution of England.

Such were the services of the peerage, — involuntary ones, we admit, and dearly purchased, because the said peerage is a huge parasite, — but valuable services, nevertheless.

The despotic work of Louis XI., of Richelieu, and of Louis XIV., the creation of a sultan, the degradation of the people, — all these Turkish tricks practised in France, the peers prevented in England. The aristocracy was a wall, restraining the king on one side, sheltering the people on the other. They atoned for their arrogance towards the people by their insolence towards the king. Simon, Earl of Leicester said to Henry III. : “ King, thou hast lied ! ” The Lords curbed the Crown, and touched their kings in the tenderest point, that of venery. Every lord, passing through a royal park, had the right to kill a deer ; in the house of the king the peer was at home ; in the Tower of London the allowance for the king was no more than that for a peer ; namely, twelve pounds sterling per week. This was the House of Lords’ doing.

Yet more. We owe to it the deposition of kings. The Lords ousted John Lackland, degraded Edward II.,

deposed Richard II., broke the power of Henry VI., and made Cromwell a possibility. What a Louis XIV. there was in Charles I. ! Thanks to Cromwell, it remained latent. By-the-bye, we may here observe that Cromwell himself, though no historian seems to have noticed the fact, aspired to the peerage. This was why he married Elizabeth Bouchier, descendant and heiress of a Cromwell, Lord Bouchier, whose peerage became extinct in 1471, and of a Bouchier, Lord Robesart, another peerage extinct in 1429. Carried on with the formidable increase of important events, he found the suppression of a king a shorter road to power than the recovery of a peerage. Two men-at-arms from the Tower, with their axes on their shoulders, between whom an accused peer stood at the bar of the House, might have been there in like attendance on the king. For five centuries the House of Lords acted on a system, and carried it out with determination. They had their days of idleness and weakness, — as, for instance, that strange time when they allowed themselves to be seduced by the vessels loaded with cheeses, hams, and Greek wines sent them by Julius II. The English aristocracy was generally restless, haughty, ungovernable, watchful, and patriotically distrustful. It was that same aristocracy which, at the end of the seventeenth century, by Act the Tenth of the year 1694, deprived the borough of Stockbridge, in Hampshire, of the right of sending members to Parliament, and forced the Commons to declare null the election for that borough, stained by papistical fraud. It imposed the test oath on James, Duke of York, and on his refusal to take it, excluded him from the throne. He reigned, notwithstanding; but the Lords finally called him to account, and banished him. That same aristocracy has had, in its long duration, some instinct of progress. It has always

given out a certain quantity of appreciable light except now towards its end, which is close at hand. Under James II. it maintained in the Lower House the proportion of three hundred and forty-six burgesses against ninety-two knights. The sixteen barons, by courtesy, of the Cinque Ports were more than counterbalanced by the fifty citizens of the twenty-five cities. Though corrupt and egotistic, that aristocracy was, in many instances, singularly impartial. It has been harshly criticised. History keeps all its compliments for the Commons. The justice of this is doubtful. We consider the part played by the Lords a very important one. Oligarchy is the independence of a barbarous State, but it is an independence. Take Poland, for instance, which is nominally a kingdom, but really a republic. Time after time, the peers of England have made their power more felt than that of the Commons. They have held the king in check again and again. Thus, in that memorable year, 1694, the Triennial Parliament Bill, rejected by the Commons, in consequence of the objections of William III., was passed by the Lords. William III., in his irritation, deprived the Earl of Bath of the governorship of Pendennis Castle, and Viscount Mordaunt of all his offices. The House of Lords was the republic of Venice in the heart of the royalty of England. To reduce the king to a doge was its object; and in proportion as it decreased the power of the crown, it increased that of the people. Royalty knew this, and hated the peerage. Each endeavoured to lessen the other. What was thus lost by each was a proportionate gain to the people. Those two blind powers, monarchy and oligarchy, could not see that they were working for the benefit of a third, which was democracy. What a pleasure it was to the Crown in the last century, to be able to hang a peer, — Lord Ferrers.

However, they hung him with a silken rope. How polite!

"They would not have hung a peer of France," the Duke of Richelieu haughtily remarked. Granted. They would have beheaded him. Still more polite!

Montmorency Tancarville signed himself "peer of France and England," thus throwing the English peerage into the second rank. The peers of France were more arrogant but less powerful, attaching more importance to precedence than to authority. There was between them and the Lords that shade of difference which distinguishes vanity from pride. To take precedence of foreign princes, of Spanish grandees, of Venetian patricians; to see seated on lower benches the Marshals of France, the Constable and the Admiral of France, even if he were a Comte de Toulouse or son of Louis XIV.; to draw a distinction between duchies in the male and female line; to maintain the proper distance between a simple *comté* like Armagnac or Albret, and a *comté pairie*, like Evreux; to wear by right, at five-and-twenty, the blue ribbon of the Golden Fleece; to counterbalance the Duc de la Tremoille, the most ancient peer of the court, with the Duke Uzès, the most ancient peer of the Parliament; to claim as many pages and horses to their carriages as an elector; to be called "Monseigneur" by the first President; to discuss whether the Duc de Maine ranked as a peer, like the Comte d'Eu, from 1458; to cross the grand chamber diagonally, or by the side,—such things were grave matters with the peers of France. The matters of paramount importance with the English peers were the Navigation Act, the Test Act, the enrollment of Europe in the service of England, the control of the sea, the expulsion of the Stuarts, and war with France. On one side, etiquette above all; on the other, empire above all.

The peers of England had the substance, the peers of France the shadow.

To conclude, the House of Lords had an object. As a civilizing agent its influence was immense. It had the honour to found a nation. It was the first embodiment of the unity of the people: English resistance, that obscure but all-powerful force, was born in the House of Lords. The barons, by a series of revolts against royalty, have paved the way for its eventual downfall. The House of Lords at the present time is rather grieved and astonished at what it has unwittingly and unintentionally done, — all the more, in fact, because it is irrevocable.

What are concessions? Restitutions, — and the people know it.

“I grant,” says the king.

“I am getting back my own,” says the people.

The House of Lords believed that it was ensuring the privileges of the peerage, but it has created the rights of the citizen. That vulture, aristocracy, has hatched the eagle’s egg, — liberty.

And now the egg is broken, the eagle is soaring, the vulture is dying.

Aristocracy is at its last gasp; England is growing up.

Still, let us be just towards the aristocracy. It entered the scale against royalty, and was its counterpoise. It was an obstacle to despotism. It was a barrier.

Let us thank it and bury it.

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD HALL.

NEAR Westminster Abbey was an old Norman palace which was burnt in the time of Henry VIII. Its wings were spared. In one of them Edward VI. placed the House of Lords, in the other the House of Commons. Neither the two wings nor the two chambers are now in existence. The whole has been rebuilt.

We have already said, and we must repeat, that there is no resemblance between the House of Lords of the present day, and that of the past. In demolishing the ancient palace, they demolished its ancient usages. The strokes of the pickaxe on the monument produce their counter-strokes on customs and charters. An old stone cannot fall without dragging an old law down with it. Place in a round room a parliament which has hitherto been held in a square room, and it will no longer be the same thing. A change in the shape of the shell changes the shape of the fish inside.

If you wish to preserve an old thing, human or divine, a code or a dogma, a nobility or a priesthood, never repair anything about it thoroughly, even its outside cover. Patch it up, nothing more. For instance, Jesuitism is a piece added to Catholicism. Treat edifices as you would treat institutions. Shadows should dwell in ruins. Worn-out powers are uneasy in freshly decorated chambers. Ruined palaces harmonize best with tattered institutions. To attempt to describe the House of Lords of other days would be to attempt to describe the un-

known. History is night. That which is no longer on the stage immediately fades into obscurity. The scene is shifted, and all is forgotten. The past has a synonym, — the Unknown.

The peers of England sat as a court of justice in Westminster Hall, and as the higher legislative chamber in a chamber specially reserved for the purpose, called The House of Lords.

In addition to the House of Peers, which did not assemble as a court, unless convoked by the Crown, two great English tribunals, inferior to the House of Peers, but superior to all other jurisdiction, sat in Westminster Hall. They occupied adjoining apartments at the end of the hall. The first was the Court of King's Bench, over which the king was supposed to preside; the second, the Court of Chancery, over which the chancellor presided. The one was a court of justice, the other a court of mercy. It was the chancellor who counselled the king to pardon, — very rarely, however.

These two courts, which are still in existence, interpreted the laws, and reconstructed them somewhat, for it is the business of the judge to carve the code into jurisprudence, — a process not infrequently plays sad havoc with justice. Legislation was worked up and sternly applied in the great hall of Westminster, the rafters of which were of chestnut wood, over which spiders could not spread their webs. There are enough of them in all conscience in the laws.

To sit as a court, and to sit as a chamber, are two distinct things. This double function constitutes supreme power. The Long Parliament, which began in November, 1640, felt the revolutionary necessity for this two-edged sword. So it declared that, as House of Lords, it possessed judicial as well as legislative power.

This double power has been, from time immemorial, vested in the House of Peers. We have just mentioned that as judges they occupied Westminster Hall; as legislators they had another chamber. This other chamber, properly called the House of Lords, was oblong and narrow. All the light in it came from four windows in deep embrasures, which received their light through the roof, and a bull's-eye, composed of six panes with curtains, over the throne. At night there was no light save that which came from twelve candelabra, fastened to the wall. The chamber of Venice was darker still. A dim light is always preferred by these owl-like personages.

A vaulted ceiling adorned with many-faced relievos and gilded cornices surmounted the chamber where the Lords assembled. The Commons had a flat ceiling. There is a hidden meaning in all monarchical buildings. At one end of the long chamber of the Lords was the door; at the end opposite to it, the throne. A few paces from the door, the bar, a transverse barrier, marked the spot where the people ended and the peerage began. To the right of the throne was a fireplace with emblazoned pinnacles, and two bas-reliefs of marble, representing, one, the victory of Cuthwulf over the Britons, in 572; the other, the geometrical plan of the borough of Dunstable, which had four streets, parallel to the four quarters of the world. The throne was approached by three steps. It was called the royal chair. On the two walls, opposite each other, were displayed in successive pictures on a huge piece of tapestry, given to the Lords by Elizabeth, the adventures of the Armada, from the time of its leaving Spain, until it was wrecked on the coast of Great Britain. The great hulls of the ships were embroidered with threads of gold and silver, which had become blackened by time.

Against this tapestry, cut at intervals by the candelabra fastened in the wall, were placed, to the right of the throne, three rows of benches for the bishops, and to the left three rows of benches for the dukes, marquises, and earls, in tiers, and separated by aisles. On the three benches of the first section sat the dukes; on those of the second, the marquises; on those of the third, the earls. The viscounts' bench was placed across, opposite the throne, and behind, between the viscounts and the bar, were two benches for the barons.

On the highest bench to the right of the throne sat the two archbishops of Canterbury and York; on the middle bench, the bishops of London, Durham, and Winchester, and the other bishops on the lowest bench. Between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other bishops there is this great difference, he is bishop "by divine Providence," while the others are only so "by divine permission." To the right of the throne was a chair for the Prince of Wales, and to the left, folding chairs for the royal dukes, and behind the latter a raised seat for minor peers, who had not the privilege of voting. Plenty of *fleurs-de-lis* everywhere, and the great escutcheon of England over the four walls, above the peers, as well as above the king.

The sons of peers, and the heirs to peerages, assisted at the debates, standing behind the throne, between the daïs and the wall. A large square space was left vacant between the tiers of benches placed along three sides of the chamber and the throne. In this space, which was covered with the state carpet, interwoven with the arms of Great Britain, were four wool-sacks, one in front of the throne, between the mace and the seal, occupied by the Lord Chancellor; one in front of the bishops, on which sat the judges, Counsellors of State, who had the

right to be present, but not to vote; one in front of the dukes, marquises, and earls, on which sat the Secretaries of State; and one in front of the viscounts and barons, on which sat the Clerk of the Crown and the Clerk of Parliament, and on which the two under-clerks wrote, kneeling.

In the middle of the space was a large covered table, heaped with bundles of papers, registers, and summonses, with magnificent ink-stands of chased silver, and with high candlesticks at the four corners.

The peers took their seats in chronological order, each according to the date of the creation of his peerage. They ranked according to their titles, and within each grade of nobility according to their seniority. At the bar stood the Usher of the Black Rod, a wand in his hand. Inside the door was the Deputy-Usher; and outside, the Crier of the Black Rod, whose duty it was to open the sittings of the Courts of Justice, with the cry, "Oyez!" in French, uttered thrice, with a solemn accent upon the first syllable. Near the Crier stood the Serjeant Mace-bearer of the Chancellor.

In royal ceremonies the temporal peers wore coronets on their heads, and the spiritual peers, mitres. The archbishops wore mitres, with a ducal coronet; and the bishops, who rank next after viscounts, mitres, with a baron's coronet.

It is to be remarked, as a coincidence at once strange and instructive, that this square formed by the throne, the bishops, and the barons, with kneeling magistrates within it, was similar in form to the ancient parliament in France under the first two dynasties. The aspect of authority was the same in France as in England. Hincmar, in his treatise, "*De Ordinatione Sacri Palatii*," described, in 853, the sittings of the House of Lords at Westminster in the eighteenth century. Strange, in-

deed! a description given nine hundred years before the existence of the thing described.

But what is history? An echo of the past in the future; a reflex from the future on the past.

The assemblage of Parliament was obligatory only once in every seven years.

The Lords deliberated in secret, with closed doors. The debates of the Commons were public. Publicity entails diminution of dignity.

The number of the Lords was unlimited. To create lords was the menace of royalty, — a means of government.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the House of Lords contained a large number of members. It has increased very considerably since that period. To dilute the aristocracy is politic. Elizabeth most probably erred in condensing the peerage into sixty-five lords. The less numerous, the more intolerant the peerage. In assemblies, the more numerous the members, the fewer the heads. James II. understood this when he increased the Upper House to a hundred and eighty-eight lords, — a hundred and eighty-six, if we subtract from the peerages the two duchies of royal favourites, Portsmouth and Cleveland. Under Anne, the total number of lords, including bishops, was two hundred and seven. Not counting the Duke of Cumberland, husband of the queen, there were twenty-five dukes, of whom the premier, Norfolk, did not take his seat, being a Catholic, and of whom the junior, Cambridge, the Elector of Hanover, did, although a foreigner. Winchester, styled first and sole Marquis of England, — as Astorga was termed sole Marquis of Spain, — was absent, being a Jacobite; so that there were only five marquises, of whom the premier was Lindsay, and the junior Lothian; seventy-nine earls, of whom Derby was premier, and

Islay junior; nine viscounts, of whom Hereford was premier, and Lonsdale junior; and sixty-two barons, of whom Abergavenny was premier, and Hervey junior. Lord Hervey, the junior baron, was what was called the "Puisne of the House." Derby, of whom Oxford, Shrewsbury, and Kent took precedence, and who was therefore but the fourth under James II., became (under Anne) premier earl. Two chancellor's names had disappeared from the list of barons, — Verulam, under which designation history finds us Bacon; and Wem, under which it finds us Jefferies. Bacon and Jefferies! both names overshadowed, though by different crimes. In 1705, the twenty-six bishops were reduced to twenty-five, the See of Chester being vacant. Among the bishops some were peers of high rank, such as William Talbot, Bishop of Oxford, who was head of the Protestant branch of that family. Others were eminent Doctors, like John Sharp, Archbishop of York, formerly Dean of Norwich; the poet, Thomas Spratt, Bishop of Rochester, an apoplectic old man; and that Bishop of Lincoln who was to die Archbishop of Canterbury, Wake, the adversary of Bossuet.

On important occasions, and when a message from the Crown to the House was expected, the whole of this august assembly—in robes, in wigs, in mitres, or plumes—formed in line, and displayed their rows of heads, in tiers, along the walls of the House, where the storm could be vaguely seen exterminating the Armada, almost as much as to say, "Even the elements are at the service of England."

CHAPTER IV.

THE OLD CHAMBER.

THE whole ceremony of Gwynplaine's investiture, from his entry under the King's Gate to his taking the test oath under the nave window, was enacted in a sort of twilight.

Lord William Cowper had not listened to many details connected with the disfigurement of the young Lord Ferman Clancharlie, considering it beneath his dignity to know whether or not a peer was handsome, or allow an inferior to intrude information of such a nature upon him. We know that a common fellow will take pleasure in saying, "That prince is humpbacked;" therefore, it is abusive to say that a lord is deformed. To the few words dropped on the subject by the queen the Lord Chancellor had contented himself with replying:—

"The face of a peer is in his peerage!"

The affidavits he read and certified enlightened him ultimately, however. Hence the precautions which he took. The face of the new lord, on his entrance into the House, might cause a sensation.

It was necessary to prevent this, so the Lord Chancellor took measures accordingly. It is a fixed idea, and rule of conduct with great personages, to create as little disturbance as possible; consequently he felt the necessity of so ordering matters that the admission of Gwynplaine would take place without any hitch, and like that of any other successor to the peerage.

It was for this reason that the Lord Chancellor directed that the reception of Lord Fermain Clancharlie should take place at the evening sitting. The Chancellor being the door-keeper — "*Quodammodo ostiarius*," says the Norman charter; "*Januarum cancellorumque potestas*," says Tertullian — he can officiate outside the room on the threshold; and Lord William Cowper had used his right by carrying out under the nave the formalities of the investiture of Lord Fermain Clancharlie. Moreover, he had appointed the hour for the ceremonies, so that the new peer actually made his entrance into the house before the house had assembled.

For the investiture of a peer on the threshold, and not in the chamber itself, there happened to be a precedent. The first hereditary baron, John de Beauchamp, of Holt Castle, created by patent of Richard II., in 1387, Baron Kidderminster, was thus installed. In renewing this precedent the Lord Chancellor was creating for himself a cause of embarrassment in the future, the inconvenience of which he felt less than two years afterwards on the entrance of Viscount Newhaven into the House of Lords.

Short-sighted as we have already stated him to be, Lord William Cowper scarcely perceived Gwynplaine's disfigurement; while the two sponsors, being old and nearly blind, did not notice it at all.

The Lord Chancellor had chosen them for that very reason.

Moreover, the Lord Chancellor, having seen only the bearing and stature of Gwynplaine, thought him a rather fine-looking man. When the door-keeper opened the folding doors to Gwynplaine there were but few peers in the house; and these few were nearly all old men. In assemblies the old members are the most punctual, just

as towards women they are the most assiduous in their attentions.

On the duke's benches there were but two persons, one white-headed, the other grey, — Thomas Osborne, Duke of Leeds, and Schomberg, son of that Schomberg, German by birth, French by his marshal's baton, and English by his peerage, who was banished by the edict of Nantes, and who, having fought against England as a Frenchman, fought against France as an Englishman. On the benches of the spiritual lords there sat only the archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of England, above; and below, Dr. Simon Patrick, Bishop of Ely, deeply engaged in conversation with Evelyn Pierrepont, Marquis of Dorchester, who was explaining to him the difference between a gabion considered singly and when used in the parapet of a field-work, and between palisades and fraises, — the former being a row of posts driven into the ground in front of the tents, for the purpose of protecting the camp; the latter, sharp-pointed stakes set up under the wall of a fortress, to prevent the escalade of the besiegers and the desertion of the besieged; and the marquis was explaining further the method of placing fraises in the ditches of redoubts, half of each stake being buried and half exposed. Thomas Thynne, Viscount Weymouth standing under the light of a chandelier, was examining a plan of his architect's for laying out his gardens at Longleat, in Wiltshire, in the Italian style, — as a lawn, broken up into plots, with squares of turf alternating with squares of red and yellow sand, of river shells, and of fine coal dust. On the viscounts' benches was a group of aged peers, Essex, Ossulstone, Peregrine, Osborne, William Zulestein, and the Earl of Rochford, together with a few more youthful ones, of the faction which did not wear wigs, who were gathered round Price Devereux, Viscount Hereford, discussing

the question whether an infusion of Apalachian holly was tea. "Very nearly," said Osborne. — "Quite," said Essex. This discussion was attentively listened to by Paulet St. John, a cousin of Bolingbroke, of whom Voltaire was, later on, in some degree the pupil; for Voltaire's education, commenced by Père Porée, was finished by Bolingbroke. On the marquises' benches, Thomas de Grey, Marquis of Kent, Lord Chamberlain to the queen, was informing Robert Bertie, Marquis of Lindsay, Lord Chamberlain of England, that the first prize in the great English lottery of 1694 had been won by two French refugees, Monsieur le Coq, formerly councillor in the parliament of Paris, and Monsieur Ravenel, a gentleman of Brittany. The Earl of Wemyss was reading a book, entitled "*Pratique Curieuse des Oracles des Sybilles.*" John Campbell, Earl of Greenwich, famous for his long chin, his gaiety, and his eighty-seven years, was writing to his mistress. Lord Chandos was trimming his nails.

The sitting which was about to take place, being a royal one, where the Crown was to be represented by commissioners, two assistant door-keepers were placing in front of the throne a bench covered with purple velvet. On the second wool-sack sat the Master of the Rolls, *sacrorum scriniorum magister* who had then for his residence the house formerly belonging to the converted Jews. Two under-clerks were kneeling, and turning over the leaves of the registers which lay on the fourth wool-sack. In the mean time the Lord Chancellor had taken his place on the first wool-sack. The members of the chamber took theirs, some sitting, others standing; then the Archbishop of Canterbury rose and read the prayer, and the session of the house began.

Gwynplaine had already been there some time without

attracting any notice. The second bench of barons, which was his place, was close to the bar, so that he had had to take but a few steps to reach it. The two peers, his sponsors, sat, one on his right hand, the other on his left; thus almost concealing the new-comer.

No one having been furnished with any previous information, the Clerk of Parliament had read in a low voice, and, as it were, mumbled through the different documents concerning the new peer, and the Lord Chancellor had proclaimed his admission in the midst of what is called, in the reports, "general inattention." Every one was talking. There buzzed through the House that cheerful hum of voices during which assemblies pass things which will not bear the light, and at which they marvel too late, when they find out what they have done.

Gwynplaine was seated in silence, with his head uncovered, between the two old peers, Lord Fitzwalter and Lord Arundel.

Let us add that Barkilphedro, like the wily scoundrel that he was, had, in his official communications to the Lord Chancellor, made light to a certain extent of the disfigurement of Lord Clancharlie, maintaining that Gwynplaine could at will suppress the grin and look serious. Besides, from an aristocratic point of view, what did it matter? Lord Cowper, as a lawyer, had declared, "The restoration of a peer is of more importance than the restoration of a king." It is a shame and an outrage for a lord to be deformed, but how does that affect his rights? The right of being a peer or a king is superior to deformity or infirmity. Was not a wild beasts' cry as hereditary as the peerage in the ancient family of the Comyns Earls of Buchan, extinct in 1347, so that it was by the tiger-yell that the Scotch peer was

recognized? Did his blood-spotted face prevent Cæsar Borgia from being Duke of Valentinois? Did blindness prevent John of Luxembourg being King of Bohemia? Did a humped back prevent Richard III. from being King of England? Viewed aright, infirmity or deformity, accepted with haughty indifference, affirm and confirm grandeur. This is another view of the question, and not the least important. As we have seen, no one could oppose the admission of Gwynplaine, and the prudent precautions of the Lord Chancellor were superfluous from the point of view of aristocratic principle.

On entering, according to the instructions of the King-at-Arms, — afterwards renewed by his sponsors, — he had bowed to the throne.

Thus all was over. He was a peer.

That pinnacle, under the glory of which he had, all his life, seen his master Ursus bow down in fear, — that prodigious pinnacle was now beneath his feet. He was in that place, so dark and yet so dazzling in England. Old peak of the feudal mountain, looked up to for six centuries by Europe and by history!

Terrible nimbus of a world of shadow! He had entered into the brightness of its glory, and his entrance was irrevocable.

He was there in his own sphere, seated on his throne, like the king on his.

He was there, and nothing in the future could obliterate the fact. The royal crown, which he saw under the dais, was brother to his coronet. He was the peer of that throne.

Yesterday, what was he? A strolling actor. To-day, what was he? A prince.

Yesterday, nothing; to-day, everything.

It was a sudden confrontation of misery and power, meeting face to face, and resolving themselves at once

into the two halves of a conscience. Two spectres, — Adversity and Prosperity, — were taking possession of the same soul, and each drawing that soul towards itself.

Oh, pathetic division of an intellect, of a will, of a brain, between two brothers who are enemies! The Phantom of Poverty and the Phantom of Wealth! Cain and Abel united in the same man!

CHAPTER V.

ARISTOCRATIC GOSSIP.

THE seats of the house filled by degrees as the lords arrived. The question to be discussed was the vote for augmenting, by a hundred thousand pounds sterling, the annual income of George of Denmark, Duke of Cumberland, the queen's husband. Besides this, it was announced that several bills assented to by her Majesty were to be brought back to the House by the Commissioners of the Crown empowered and charged to sanction them. This raised the sitting to a royal one. The peers all wore their robes over their usual court or ordinary dress. These robes, similar to that which had been thrown over Gwynplaine, were alike for all, excepting that the dukes had five bands of ermine, edged with gold; marquises, four; earls and viscounts, three; and barons, two. Most of the lords entered in groups. They had met in the corridors, and were continuing the conversations there begun. A few came in alone. The costumes of all were imposing; but neither their attitudes nor their words corresponded with them. On entering, each one bowed to the throne.

The peers flowed in. The series of great names marched past with scant ceremonial, the public not being present. Leicester entered and shook Lichfield's hand; then came Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough and Monmouth, the friend of Locke, at whose advice he had proposed the recoinage of money; then Charles Campbell, Earl of Loudoun, listening to Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke; then

Dormer, Earl of Caernarvon; then Robert Sutton, Baron Lexington, son of that Lexington who recommended Charles II. to banish Gregorio Leti, the historiographer, who was so ill-advised as to try to become a historian; then Thomas Bellasys, Viscount Falconburg, a handsome old man; and the three cousins, Howard, Earl of Bindon, Bowes Howard, Earl of Berkshire, and Stafford Howard, Earl of Stafford,—all together; then John Lovelace, the Baron Lovelace, which peerage became extinct in 1736, so that Richardson was enabled to introduce Lovelace in his book, and to create a type under the name. All these personages,—celebrated each in his own way, either in politics or in war, and many of whom were an honour to England,—were laughing and talking.

It was history, as it were, seen in undress.

In less than half an hour the House was nearly full. This was to be expected, as the sitting was a royal one. What was more unusual was the eagerness of the conversations. The House, so sleepy not long before, now hummed like a hive of bees.

The arrival of the peers who had come in late had woke them up. These lords had brought news. It was strange that the peers who had been there at the opening of the session knew nothing of what had occurred, while those who had not been there knew all about it.

Several lords had come from Windsor.

For some hours past the adventures of Gwynplaine had been the subject of conversation. A secret is a net; let one mesh drop, and the whole falls to pieces. That morning, in consequence of the incidents related above, the whole story of a peer found on the stage, and of a mountebank become a lord, had burst forth at Windsor. The princes had talked about it, and then the lackeys. From the court the news soon reached the town. Events have a weight, and the mathematical rule of velocity,

increasing in proportion to the squares of the distance, applies to them. They fall upon the public, and work themselves through it with the most astounding rapidity. At seven o'clock no one in London had caught wind of the story. By eight, Gwynplaine was the talk of the town. Only the lords who had been so punctual that they were present before the assembling of the House were ignorant of the circumstances, not having been in the town when the matter was talked of by every one, and having been in the House, where nothing had been perceived. Seated quietly on their benches, they were addressed by the eager new-comers.

"Well!" said Francis Brown, Viscount Montacute, to the Marquis of Dorchester.

"What?"

"Is it really so?"

"What?"

"Why, about the Laughing Man!"

"Who is the Laughing Man?"

"Don't you know the Laughing Man?"

"No."

"He is a clown, a fellow who has been performing at fairs. He has an extraordinary face, which people gave a penny to look at. A mountebank."

"Well, what then?"

"He has just been installed as a Peer of England."

"You must be the Laughing Man, my Lord Montacute!"

"I am not jesting, my Lord Dorchester."

Lord Montacute made a sign to the Clerk of Parliament, who rose from his wool-sack, and confirmed to their lordships the fact of the admission of the new peer. Moreover, he related the circumstances.

"How wonderful!" said Lord Dorchester. "I was talking to the Bishop of Ely all the while."

The young Earl of Annesley addressing old Lord Eure,

who had but two years more to live, as he died in 1707, asked,—

“My Lord Eure, did you know Lord Linnæus Clancharlie?”

“A man of by-gone days. Yes, I did.”

“He died in Switzerland?”

“Yes; we were distantly related.”

“He was a republican under Cromwell, and remained a republican under Charles II., did he not?”

“A republican? Not at all! He was only sulking. He had a personal quarrel with the king. I know from good authority that Lord Clancharlie would have returned to his allegiance, if they had given him the office of chancellor, which Lord Hyde held.”

“You astonish me, Lord Eure. I heard that Lord Clancharlie was an honest politician.”

“An honest politician! Does such a thing exist? Young man, there is no such thing!”

“And Cato?”

“Oh, you believe in Cato, do you?”

“And Aristides?”

“They did well to exile him.”

“And Thomas More?”

“They did well to cut off his head.”

“And in your opinion, Lord Clancharlie —”

“Was a man of the same stamp. As for a man remaining in exile, why, that is simply ridiculous.”

“He died there.”

“An ambitious man disappointed. You ask if I knew him? I should think so, indeed. I was his most intimate friend.”

“Were you aware, Lord Eure, that he married while in Switzerland?”

“I am pretty sure of it.”

“And that he had a lawful heir by that marriage?”

"Yes ; who is dead."

"Who is living."

"Living ?"

"Living."

"Impossible !"

"It is a fact, — proved, authenticated, confirmed, registered."

"Then that son will inherit the Clancharlie peerage ?"

"He is not going to inherit it."

"Why ?"

"Because he has inherited it already. It is an accomplished fact."

"Done ?"

"Turn your head, Lord Eure ; he is sitting behind you, on the barons' benches."

Lord Eure turned, but Gwynplaine's face was concealed under his forest of hair.

"So he has already adopted the new fashion," said the old man, who could see nothing but his hair. "He does not wear a wig."

Grantham accosted Colepepper.

"Some one is finely sold."

"Who is that ?"

"David Dirry-Moir."

"How is that ?"

"He is no longer a peer."

"How can that be ?"

And Henry Auverquerque, Earl of Grantham, proceeded to tell John Baron Colepepper the whole story about the flask which had been carried to the Admiralty, about the confession of the Comprachicos, the *Jussu regis*, countersigned *Jefferies*, and the confrontation in the torture-cell at Southwark, the proofs of all the facts acknowledged by the Lord Chancellor and by the queen ; the taking of the oath under the nave, and finally the

admission of Lord Fermain Clancharlie at the commencement of the sitting. Both the lords endeavoured to distinguish his face as he sat between Lord Fitzwalter and Lord Arundel, but with no better success than Lord Eure and Lord Annesley.

Gwynplaine, either by chance or by the arrangement of his sponsors, forewarned by the Lord Chancellor, was so placed in shadow as to escape their curiosity.

“Who is it? Where is he?”

Such was the exclamation of all the new-comers, but no one succeeded in making him out distinctly. Some, who had seen Gwynplaine in the Green Box, were exceedingly curious, but without avail. As it sometimes happens that a young lady is intrenched within a troop of dowagers, Gwynplaine was, as it were, enveloped in several layers of lords, old, infirm, and indifferent. Good livers, with the gout, are marvellously indifferent to stories about their neighbours.

There passed, from hand to hand, copies of a letter three lines in length, written, it was said, by the Duchess Josiana to the queen, her sister, in answer to the command given by her Majesty, that she should espouse the new peer, the lawful heir of the Clancharlies, Lord Fermain. This letter was couched in the following terms:—

MADAM, — The arrangement will suit me just as well. I can have Lord David for my lover.

(Signed) JOSIANA.

This note, whether a true copy or a forgery, was received by all with the greatest enthusiasm. A young lord, Charles Okehampton, Baron Mohun, who belonged to the wigless faction, read and re-read it with delight. Lewis Duras, Earl of Faversham, an Englishman with a Frenchman's wit, looked at Mohun and smiled.

"That is a woman I should like to marry!" exclaimed Lord Mohun.

The lords around them overheard the following dialogue between Duras and Mohun.

"Marry the Duchess Josiana, Lord Mohun!"

"Why not? She would make one very happy!"

"She would make many very happy, you mean?"

"But is it not always a question of many?"

"Lord Mohun, you are right. With regard to women, we have always the leavings of others. Has any one ever had a beginning?"

"Adam, perhaps."

"Not he."

"Then Satan."

"My dear lord," concluded Lewis Duras, "Adam only lent his name. Poor dupe! He endorsed the human race. Man was begotten of woman by the devil."

Hugh Cholmondeley, Earl of Cholmondeley, strong in points of law, was asked from the bishops' benches by Nathaniel Crew, who was doubly a peer, being a temporal peer, as Baron Crew, and a spiritual peer, as Bishop of Durham.

"Is it possible?" said Crew.

"Is it regular?" said Cholmondeley.

"The investiture of this peer was made outside the House," replied the bishop; "but it is stated that there are precedents for it."

"Yes. Lord Beauchamp, under Richard II.; Lord Chenay, under Elizabeth."

"Lord Broghill, under Cromwell."

"Cromwell goes for nothing."

"What do you think of it all?"

"Many different things."

"My Lord Cholmondeley, what will be the rank of this young Lord Clancharlie in the House?"

"My Lord Bishop, the interruption of the Republic having displaced ancient rights of precedence, Clancharlie now ranks in the peerage between Barnard and Somers, so that should each be called upon to speak in turn, Lord Clancharlie would be the eighth in rotation."

"Really! he, a mountebank from a public show!"

"The act, *per se*, does not astonish me, my Lord Bishop. We meet with such things. Still more wonderful circumstances occur. Was not the War of the Roses predicted by the sudden drying up of the river Ouse, in Bedfordshire, on January 1, 1399. Now, if a river dries up, a peer may, quite as naturally, fall into a servile condition. Ulysses, King of Ithaca, played all kinds of rôles. Fermain Clancharlie remained a lord under his player's garb. Sordid garments do not mar the soul's nobility. But taking the test and the investiture outside the sitting, though strictly legal, might give rise to objections. I am of opinion that it will be necessary to look into the matter, to see if there be any ground to question the Lord Chancellor in Privy Council, later on. We shall see in a week or two what is best to be done."

And the Bishop added, —

"All the same. It is an adventure such as has not occurred since Earl Gesbodius's time."

Gwynplaine, the Laughing Man; the Tadcaster Inn; the Green Box; "Chaos Vanquished;" Switzerland; Chillon; the Comprachicos; exile; mutilation; the Republic; Jefferies; James II.; the *jussu regis*; the bottle opened at the Admiralty; the father, Lord Linnæus; the legitimate son, Lord Fermain; the illegitimate son, Lord David; the probable law suits; the Duchess Josiana; the Lord Chancellor; the queen, — all these topics of conversation ran from bench to bench.

Whispering is like a train of gunpowder.

They seized on every incident. The details of the occurrence caused an excited murmur through the house. Gwynplaine, absorbed in reverie, heard the buzzing without knowing that he was the cause of it. He was strangely attentive to the depths, not to the surface. Excessive attention produces isolation.

The buzz of conversation in the House impedes the progress of business no more than the dust raised by a troop impedes its march. The judges—who in the Upper House were mere assistants, without the privilege of speaking, except when questioned—had taken their places on the second wool-sack; and the three Secretaries of State theirs, on the third.

The heirs to peerages flowed into their compartment, at once without and within the House, at the back of the throne.

The peers, who were still minors, were on their own benches. In 1705 the number of these lords amounted to no less than a dozen,—Huntingdon, Lincoln, Dorset, Warwick, Bath, Barlington, Derwentwater (destined to a tragical death), Longueville, Lonsdale, Dudley, Ward, and Carteret: a party of youths consisting of eight earls, two viscounts, and two barons.

Each lord had taken his seat on the three stages of benches in the centre. Almost all the bishops were there. The dukes mustered strong, beginning with Charles Seymour, Duke of Somerset, and ending with George Augustus, Elector of Hanover, and Duke of Cambridge, junior in date of creation, and consequently junior in rank. All were seated in order, according to right of precedence: Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, whose grandfather had sheltered Hobbs, at Hardwicke, when he was ninety-two; Lenox, Duke of Richmond; the three Fitzroys, the Duke of Southampton, the Duke

of Grafton, and the Duke of Northumberland; Butler, Duke of Ormond; Somerset, Duke of Beaufort; Beaulclerc, Duke of St. Albans; Paulet, Duke of Bolton; Osborne, Duke of Leeds; Wrotesley Russell, Duke of Bedford, — whose motto and device was *che sara sara*, which expresses a determination to take things as they come; Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham; Manners, Duke of Rutland; and others. Neither Howard, Duke of Norfolk, nor Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury, were present, being Catholics; nor Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (the French Malbrouck), who was at that time fighting the French and beating them. There were no Scotch dukes then, — Queensberry, Montrose, and Roxburgh not being admitted till 1707.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HIGH AND THE LOW.

ALL at once a bright light illumined the House. Four door-keepers brought in and placed on each side of the throne four high candelabra filled with wax-lights. The throne, thus illumined, shone in a kind of purple light. It was empty, but august. The presence of the queen herself could not have added much majesty to it.

The Usher of the Black Rod entered with his wand, and announced:—

“The Lords Commissioners of her Majesty.”

The hum of conversation immediately subsided.

A clerk, in a wig and gown, appeared at the great door, holding a velvet cushion embroidered with *fleurs-de-lis*, on which lay several rolls of parchment. These were bills. From each hung by a silken string the *bille*, or *bulle*, from which laws are called bills in England, and bulls in Rome. Behind the clerk walked three men in peers’ robes, and wearing plumed hats.

These were the Royal Commissioners. The first was the Lord High Treasurer of England, Godolphin; the second, the Lord President of the Council, Pembroke; the third, the Lord of the Privy Seal, Newcastle.

They walked one by one according to precedence, not of their rank, but of their creation,—Godolphin first, Newcastle last, although a duke.

On reaching the bench in front of the throne, to which they bowed, removing and replacing their hats, they sat down on the bench.

The Lord Chancellor turned towards the Usher of the Black Rod, and said, —

“Summon the Commons to the bar of the House.”

The Usher of the Black Rod retired.

The Clerk, who was one of the clerks of the House of Lords, placed on the table, between the four wool-sacks, the cushion on which the bills rested.

Then came a pause, which continued several minutes. Two door-keepers placed before the bar a stool, with three steps. This stool was covered with crimson velvet, on which *fleurs-de-lis* were designed in gilt nails.

The great door, which had been closed, was re-opened; and a voice announced, —

“The faithful Commons of England.”

It was the Usher of the Black Rod announcing the other half of Parliament.

The Lords put on their hats.

The members of the House of Commons entered, preceded by their Speaker, all with uncovered heads.

They stopped at the bar. They were in their ordinary garb; for the most part dressed in black and wearing swords.

The Speaker, the Right Honourable John Smith, an esquire, member for the borough of Andover, got up on the stool which was at the centre of the bar. The Speaker of the House of Commons wore a robe of black satin, with large hanging sleeves, embroidered before and behind with brandenburgs of gold, and a wig smaller than that of the Lord Chancellor. He was majestic, but inferior.

The Commons, both Speaker and members, stood waiting with uncovered heads, before the peers, who remained seated, with their hats on.

Among the members of Commons might have been noticed the Chief Justice of Chester, Joseph Jekyll; the

queen's three Serjeants-at-Law, — Hooper, Powys, and Parker; James Montagu, Solicitor-General; and the Attorney-General, Simon Harcourt. With the exception of a few baronets and knights, and nine lords by courtesy, — Hartington, Windsor, Woodstock, Mordaunt, Granby, Scudamore, Fitzhardinge, Hyde, and Berkeley (sons of peers and heirs to peerages), — all were of the people; a sort of gloomy and silent crowd.

When the noise made by the trampling of feet had ceased, the Crier of the Black Rod, standing by the door, exclaimed, —

“Oyez!”

The Clerk of the Crown arose. He took, unfolded, and read the first of the documents on the cushion. It was a message from the queen, naming three commissioners to represent her in Parliament, with power to sanction bills presented for consideration.

“To wit: —”

Here the Clerk raised his voice.

“Sidney Earl Godolphin.”

The Clerk bowed to Lord Godolphin. Lord Godolphin raised his hat.

The Clerk continued: —

“Thomas Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery.”

The Clerk bowed to Lord Pembroke. Lord Pembroke touched his hat.

The Clerk resumed: —

“John Holles, Duke of Newcastle.”

The Duke of Newcastle nodded.

The Clerk of the Crown resumed his seat.

The Clerk of Parliament arose. His under-clerk, who had been on his knees behind him, got up also. Both turned their faces to the throne, and their backs to the Commons.

There were five bills on the cushion. These five bills,

voted by the Commons and agreed to by the Lords, awaited the royal sanction.

The Clerk of the Parliaments read the first bill.

It was a bill passed by the Commons, charging the country with the costs of the improvements made by the queen to her residence at Hampton Court, amounting to a million sterling.

The reading over, the Clerk bowed low to the throne. The under-clerk bowed lower still; then, half turning his head towards the Commons, he said, —

“The queen accepts your benevolence, — *et ainsi le veut.*”

The Clerk read the second bill.

It was a law condemning to imprisonment and fine whomsoever withdrew himself from the service of the train-bands. The train-bands were a militia, recruited from the middle and lower classes, serving gratis, which in Elizabeth's reign furnished, on the approach of the Armada, one hundred and eighty-five thousand foot-soldiers and forty thousand horse.

The two clerks made a fresh bow to the throne, after which the under-clerk, again half turning his face to the Commons, said, —

“La Reine le veut.”

The third bill was for increasing the tithes and prebends of the Bishopric of Lichfield and Coventry, which was one of the richest in England; for making an increased yearly allowance to the cathedral, for augmenting the number of its canons, and for increasing its deaneries and benefices, “to the benefit of our holy religion,” as the preamble set forth.

The fourth bill added to the budget fresh taxes, — one on marbled paper; one on hackney coaches, fixed at the number of eight hundred in London, each taxed at a sum equal to fifty-two francs yearly; one on barristers, attor-

neys, and solicitors, at forty-eight francs a year per head; one on tanned skins, notwithstanding, said the preamble, the complaints of the workers in leather. One on soap, notwithstanding the petitions of the City of Exeter and of the whole of Devonshire, where great quantities of cloth and serge were manufactured; one on wine at four shillings; one on flour; one on barley and hops; and one renewing for four years "the necessities of the State," said the preamble, "demanding attention in spite of the remonstrances of commerce;" and tonnage-dues, varying from six francs per ton, for ships coming from the westward, to eighteen francs on those coming from the eastward. Finally, the bill, declaring the sums already levied for the current year insufficient, concluded by decreeing a poll-tax on each subject throughout the kingdom of four shillings per head, adding that a double tax would be levied on every person who endeavoured to evade the demands of the Government.

The fifth bill forbade the admission into the hospital of any sick person who on entering did not deposit a pound sterling to pay his funeral expenses in case of death. These last three bills, like the first two, were sanctioned one after another, and made law by a bow to the throne, and the four words pronounced by the under-clerk, "*la Reine le veut*," spoken over his shoulder to the Commons. Then the under-clerk knelt down again before the fourth wool-sack, and the Lord Chancellor said, —

"*Soit fait comme il est désiré.*"

This terminated the royal sitting. The Speaker, bending nearly double before the Chancellor, descended from the stool, backwards, lifting up his robe behind him; the members of the House of Commons bowed to the ground, and as the Upper House resumed the business of the day, heedless of all these marks of respect, the Commons departed.

CHAPTER VII.

STORMS OF MEN ARE WORSE THAN STORMS OF OCEANS.

THE doors having closed again, the Usher of the Black Rod re-entered; the Lords Commissioners left the bench of State and took their places at the top of the dukes' benches, by right of their commission, and the Lord Chancellor addressed the House.

"My lords, the House having deliberated for several days on the Bill which proposes to augment, by £100,000 sterling the annual provision for his Royal Highness the Prince, her Majesty's Consort, and the debate having been closed, the House will now proceed to vote; the votes will be taken according to custom, beginning with the puisne baron. Each lord, on his name being called, will rise and answer "content," or "not content," and will be at liberty to explain his reasons for his vote, if he thinks fit to do so. Clerk, take the vote."

The Clerk of the House, standing up, opened a large folio, and spread it open on a gilded desk. This book was the list of the Peerage.

The puisne of the House of Lords at that time, was John Hervey, created Baron and Peer in 1703, from whom is descended the Marquis of Bristol.

The Clerk called, —

"My Lord John, Baron Hervey."

An old man in a fair wig arose, and said, "Content."
Then he sat down.

The Clerk registered his vote.

The Clerk continued, —

“My Lord Francis Seymour, Baron Conway, of Killultagh.”

“Content,” murmured, half rising, an elegant young man, with a face like a page, who little thought that he was to be the ancestor of the Marquises of Hertford.

“My Lord John Leveson, Baron Gower,” continued the Clerk.

This baron, from whom the Dukes of Sutherland were to spring, rose, and, as he reseated himself, said, “Content.”

“My Lord Heneage Finch, Baron Guernsey,” continued the Clerk.

The ancestor of the Earls of Aylesford, neither older nor less elegant than the ancestor of the Marquises of Hertford, justified his device, *aperto vivere voto*, by the proud tone in which he exclaimed, “Content.”

While he was resuming his seat, the Clerk called the fifth Baron.

“My Lord John, Baron Granville.”

Rising and resuming his seat quickly, “Content,” exclaimed Lord Granville, of Potheridge, whose peerage was to become extinct in 1709.

The Clerk passed to the sixth.

“My Lord Charles Montague, Baron Halifax.”

“Content,” said Lord Halifax, the bearer of a title which had become extinct with the Saville family, and was destined to become extinct again in that of Montague. (Montague is distinct from Montagu and Montacute.) And Lord Halifax added, “Prince George has an allowance as her Majesty’s Consort; he has another as Prince of Denmark; another as Duke of Cumberland; another as Lord High-Admiral of England and Ireland; but he has none as Commander-in-Chief. This is an

injustice and a wrong which must be set right, in the interest of the English people."

Then Lord Halifax proceeded to utter an eulogium on the Christian religion, abused popery, and voted the subsidy.

Lord Halifax sat down, and the Clerk resumed:—

"My Lord Christopher, Baron Barnard."

Lord Barnard, from whom were to descend the Dukes of Cleveland, rose to answer to his name.

"Content."

He took some time in reseating himself, for he wore a lace band which was well worth showing. For all that, Lord Barnard was a worthy gentleman and a brave officer.

While Lord Barnard was resuming his seat, the Clerk, who read by routine, hesitated for an instant; he re-adjusted his spectacles, and leaned over the register with renewed attention; then, lifting up his head, he said:

"My Lord Fermain Clancharlie, Baron Clancharlie and Hunkerville."

Gwynplaine arose.

"Not content," said he.

Every face was turned towards him. Gwynplaine remained standing. The candelabra placed on each side of the throne lighted up his features, bringing them out into the same bold relief against the darkness of the chamber that a mask would show against a background of dense smoke.

Gwynplaine had made that effort over himself which, it may be remembered, was possible to him in extremity. By a concentration of will equal to that which would be needed to subdue a tiger, he had succeeded in obliterating the fatal grin upon his face for a moment. For an instant he ceased to laugh. This effort could not last long. Rebellion against that which is our law or

our fatality, must be short-lived; at times the waters of the sea resist the power of gravitation, swell into a water-spout and become a mountain, but only on condition of speedily receding again.

Such a struggle was Gwynplaine's. For one instant, which he felt to be a solemn one, by a prodigious intensity of will, but for not much longer than the duration of a flash of lightning, he cast the dark veil of his soul over his brow, and held his incurable laugh in abeyance. He had withdrawn the mirth from that face upon which it had been carved, and the effect was terrible.

"Who is this man?" exclaimed everybody.

Those bristling masses of hair; those dark hollows under the brows; the deep gaze of eyes which they could not see; that head, in the wild outlines of which light and darkness so weirdly mingled,—were marvellous indeed. It was beyond all understanding; much as they had heard of him, the sight of Gwynplaine was a terror. Even those who had expected to behold a monstrosity found their expectations greatly surpassed. It was as if during a banquet on a serene evening upon the mountain reserved for the gods, the face of Prometheus, mangled by the vulture's beak, should have suddenly appeared before them, like a blood-tinged moon on the horizon. Olympus gazing on Caucasus! What a vision! Old and young, open-mouthed with astonishment, fixed their eyes upon Gwynplaine.

An old man, respected by the whole House, who had seen many men and many things, and who was destined for a dukedom, — Thomas, Earl of Wharton, — rose in terror.

"What does this mean?" he cried. "Who brought this man into the House? Let him be put out."

Then addressing Gwynplaine, haughtily:—

Lord Clancharlie's Speech.

Photo-Etching. — From Drawing by G. Rochegrosse.



"Who are you? Whence do you come?"

Gwynplaine answered, —

"Out of the depths."

And folding his arms, he looked at the lords.

"Who am I? I am wretchedness. My lords, I have a word to say to you."

A shudder ran through the House. Then all was silent.

"My lords, you are highly placed," Gwynplaine continued. "It is well. We must believe that God has his reasons that it should be so. You have power, opulence, pleasure, the sun ever shining in your zenith, authority unbounded, enjoyment without a sting, and a total forgetfulness of others. So be it. But there is something below you — above you, may be. My lords, I bring you news, — news of the existence of mankind."

Assemblies are like children. A strange occurrence is like a Jack-in-the-box to them. It frightens them; but they like it. It is as if a spring were touched, and the devil jumps up. Mirabeau, who was also deformed, was a case in point in France.

Gwynplaine felt within himself, at that moment, a strange elevation of soul. In addressing a body of men, one's foot seems to rest on them; to rest, as it were, on a pinnacle of souls, on human hearts, that quiver under one's heel. Gwynplaine was no longer the man who had been almost contemptible only the night before. The fumes of the sudden elevation which had disturbed him, had cleared off and become transparent, and in the lofty rank which had so excited his vanity at first, he now saw only a duty. That which had at first degraded, now elevated, him. He was illuminated by one of those dazzling flashes which emanate from duty.

All round Gwynplaine arose cries of "Hear, hear!"

Meanwhile, he had succeeded in retaining on his

features that severe and sad contraction under which the laugh was fretting like a wild horse struggling to escape.

He resumed : —

“ I am one who has come up out of the depths. My lords, you are rich and powerful. Therein lies your danger. You profit by the night; but beware! The Dawn is all-powerful. You cannot prevail over that. It is coming. Nay! it is already come. Within it is the day-spring of irresistible light. And who shall hinder that sling from hurling the sun into the sky? The sun I speak of is Right. You are Privilege. Tremble! The real master of the house is about to knock at the door. What is the father of Privilege? Chance. What is his son? Abuse. Neither Chance nor Abuse are abiding. For both, a dark morrow is at hand! I am come to warn you. I am come to impeach your happiness. It is fashioned out of the misery of your neighbour. You have everything, and that everything is composed of the little of others. My lords, I am an advocate without hope, pleading a cause that is lost; but that cause God will gain on appeal. As for me, I am but a voice. Mankind is a mouth, of which I am the cry. You shall hear me! I am about to open before you, peers of England, the great assize of the people, — of that sovereign who is the subject; of that criminal who is the judge. I am weighed down by the burden of all I have to say. Where am I to begin? I know not. I have gathered together, in the vast diffusion of suffering, my innumerable and scattered pleas. What am I to do with them now? They overwhelm me, and I must cast them before you in a confused mass. Did I foresee this? No. You are astonished. So I am. Yesterday, I was a strolling player. To-day, I am a peer. Mysterious ruling! Of whom? Of the great Unknown.

Let us all tremble. My lords, all the blue sky is for you. Of this immense universe you see only the sunshine. Believe me, it has its shadows. Among you I am called Lord Fermain Clancharlie; but my true name is one of poverty, — Gwynplaine. I am a wretched thing carved out of the stuff of which the great are made, for such was the pleasure of a king. That is my history. Many among you knew my father. I knew him not. His connection with you was his noble descent; his outlawry is the bond between him and me. What God willed was well. I was cast into the abyss. For what end? To search its depths. I am a diver, and I have brought back the pearl of truth. I speak, because I know. You shall hear me, my lords. I have seen, I have felt! Suffering is not a mere word, ye happy ones! I grew up in poverty; winter has frozen me; I have known hunger; I have suffered contempt; I have undergone pestilence; I have drunk of shame. And I will vomit all these up before you, and this ejection of misery shall sully your feet and flame about them. I hesitated before I allowed myself to be brought to the place where I now stand, because I owed duties to others elsewhere, and my heart is not here. What passed within me has nothing to do with you. When the man whom you call Usher of the Black Rod came to seek me by order of the woman whom you call the queen, the idea struck me for a moment that I would refuse to come. But it seemed to me that the hidden hand of God pressed me to the spot, and I obeyed. I felt that I must come among you. Why? Because of my rags of yesterday. It is to raise my voice among those who have eaten their fill that God reared me with the famished. Oh, have pity! Of this fatal world to which you believe yourselves to belong, you know nothing. Placed so high, you are out of it. But I will tell you what it is; I have

had experience enough. I come from beneath the pressure of your feet. I can tell you your weight. O you who are masters, do you know what you are? Do you realize what you are doing? No. Oh, it is dreadful! One night, a night of tempest, a little deserted child, an orphan alone in the immeasurable creation, I made my entrance into that darkness which you call society. The first thing that I saw was the law, in the form of a gibbet; the second was riches, your riches, in the form of a woman dead of cold and hunger; the third, the future, in the form of a child left to die; the fourth, goodness, truth, and justice, in the form of a vagabond, whose only friend and companion was a wolf."

Just then, Gwynplaine, stricken by a sudden emotion, felt the sobs rising in his throat, causing him unfortunately to burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

The contagion was immediate. A cloud had hung over the assemblage. It might have broken into terror; it broke into delight. Wild merriment seized the entire House. Nothing pleases the great assemblies of sovereign man so much as buffoonery. It is their revenge upon their graver moments.

The laughter of kings is like the laughter of the gods. There is always a cruel sting in it. The lords set to play. Sneers gave sting to their laughter. They clapped their hands around the speaker, and insulted him. A volley of gay exclamations assailed him like bright but wounding hailstones.

"Bravo, Gwynplaine!" — "Bravo, Laughing Man!" — "Bravo, Snout of the Green Box!" — "Mask of Tar-rinzeau Field!" — "You are going to give us a performance!" — "That's right; talk away!" — "There's a funny fellow!" — "How the beast does laugh, to be sure!" — "Good-day, pantaloons!" — "How d'ye do, my lord clown!" — "Go on with your speech!" — "That fellow a

Peer of England!" — "Go on!" — "No, no!" — "Yes, yes!"

The Lord Chancellor was much disturbed.

A deaf peer, James Butler, Duke of Ormond, placing his hand to his ear like an ear-trumpet, asked Charles Beauclerk, Duke of Saint Albans:—

"How has he voted?"

"Not content."

"By heavens!" said Ormond, "I can understand that, with such a face as his!"

Do you think that you can ever recapture a crowd once it has escaped your grasp? No, eloquence is a bit; if the bit breaks, the audience runs away, and rushes on till it has thrown the orator. Hearers naturally dislike the speaker, which is a fact not as clearly understood as it ought to be. Instinctively he pulls hard on the reins, but that is a useless expedient. However, all orators try it, as Gwynplaine did.

He looked for a moment at these men who were laughing at him. Then he cried:—

"So, you insult misery! Silence, Peers of England! Judges, listen to my pleading! Oh, I conjure you, have pity. Pity for whom? Pity for yourselves. Who is in danger? Yourselves! Do you not see that you are in a balance, and that your power is in one scale, and your responsibility in the other? It is God who is weighing you. Oh, do not laugh. Think. The trembling of your consciences is the oscillation of the balance in which God is weighing your actions. You are not wicked; you are like other men, — neither better nor worse. You believe yourselves to be gods, but be ill tomorrow, and see your divinity shivering in fever! We are worth one as much as the other. I address myself to honest men; there are such here. I address myself to lofty intellects; there are such here. I address my-

self to generous souls; there are such here. You are fathers, sons, and brothers; therefore your hearts are often touched. He among you who has this morning watched the waking of his little child, is a good man. All hearts are alike. Humanity is nothing but a heart. Between those who oppress and those who are oppressed, there is only a difference of rank. Your feet tread on the heads of men. The fault is not yours; it is that of the social Babel. The building is faulty, and out of the perpendicular. One floor bears down the other. Listen, and I will tell you what to do. Oh, as you are powerful, be brotherly! As you are great, be tender. If you only knew what I have seen! Alas! What gloom there is beneath you! The people are in a dungeon. How many are condemned who are innocent! No daylight, no air, no virtue! They are without hope; and yet — there is the danger! — they expect something. Realize all this misery. There are beings who live in death. There are little girls who at twelve begin by prostitution, and who end in old age at twenty. As to the severities of the criminal code, they are fearful. I speak somewhat at random, and cannot choose my words. I say everything that comes into my head. No later than yesterday, I, who stand here, saw a man lying in chains, naked, with stones piled on his chest, expire in torture. Do you know of these things? No. If you knew what goes on, you would not dare to be happy. Who of you have been to Newcastle-upon-Tyne? There, in the mines, are men who chew coals to fill their stomachs and cheat hunger. Look here! in Lancashire, Ribblesdale has sunk, by poverty, from a town to a village. I do not see that Prince George of Denmark requires a hundred thousand pounds extra. I should prefer receiving a poor sick man into the hospital without compelling him to pay his funeral expenses in

advance. In Caernarvon, and at Strathmore, as well as at Strathbickan, the sufferings of the poor are horrible. At Strafford, they cannot drain the marsh for want of money. The manufactories are shut up all over Lancashire. There is enforced idleness everywhere. Do you know that the herring fishers in Harlech eat grass when the fishery fails? Do you know that in Burton-Lazars there are still lepers confined, on whom they fire if they leave their tan houses? In Ailesbury, a town of which one of you is lord, destitution is chronic. At Penkridge, in Coventry, where you have just endowed a cathedral and enriched a bishop, there are no beds in the cabins, and they dig holes in the earth, in which to put the little children to sleep, so that instead of beginning life in the cradle, they begin it in the grave. I have seen these things. My lords, do you know who pays the taxes you assess? The dying! Alas! you deceive yourselves. You are going the wrong road. You augment the poverty of the poor to increase the riches of the rich. You should do the reverse. What! take from the worker to give to the idle; take from the tattered to give to the well-clad; take from the beggar to give to the prince! Oh, yes, I have old republican blood in my veins. I have a horror of these things. How I execrate kings! And how shameless are the women! I have been told a sad story. How I hate Charles II. A woman whom my father loved, gave herself to that king while my father was dying in exile. The prostitute! Charles II.! James II.! After a scamp, a scoundrel! What is there in a king? A man, feeble and contemptible, subject to wants and infirmities. Of what good is a king? You cultivate that parasite, royalty; you make a serpent of the worm, a dragon of the insect. Oh, pity the poor! You increase the weight of the taxes for the profit of the throne. Look to the laws

which you decree. Take heed of the suffering swarms which you crush. Cast your eyes down. Look at what is beneath your feet. O ye great, there are the little. Have pity! yes, have pity on yourselves; for the nation is in agony, and when the lower part of the trunk dies, the upper part dies too. Death spares no limb. When night comes no one can keep his corner of daylight. Are you selfish? Then save others. The destruction of the vessel cannot be a matter of indifference to any passenger. There can be no wreck for some that is not wreck for all. Oh, believe me, the abyss is yawning for all!"

The laughter increased and became irresistible.

For that matter, a little extravagance of expression suffices to amuse any assembly. To be grotesque without and tragic within, what suffering can be more humiliating? What pain deeper? Gwynplaine felt it. His words were an appeal in one direction, his face in the other. What a terrible position was his!

Suddenly, his voice rang out in strident bursts.

"How gay these men are! Be it so. Here is irony face to face with agony; a sneer mocking the death-rattle. They are all-powerful. Perhaps so. We shall see. Behold! I am one of them; but I am also one of you, O ye fools. A king sold me. A poor man sheltered me. Who mutilated me? A prince. Who healed and nourished me? A pauper. I am Lord Clancharlie; but I am still Gwynplaine. I take my place among the great; but I belong to the mean. I am among those who rejoice; but I belong to those who suffer. Oh, this whole system of society is false! Some day that which is true will come. Then there will be no more lords; and there shall be free and living men. There will be no more masters; there will be fathers. Such is the future. No more prostration; no more baseness; no more igno-

rance; no more human beasts of burden; no more courtiers; no more toadies; no more kings; but Light! In the mean time, see me here. I have a right, and I will use it. Is it a right? No, if I use it for myself; yes, if I use it for the benefit of all. I will be heard, my lords, being one of you. O my brothers below, I will tell them of your nakedness. I will rise up with a bundle of the people's rags in my hand. I will remind the masters of the misery of the slaves; and these favoured and arrogant ones shall no longer be able to escape the remembrance of the wretched, nor the princes the sufferings of the poor; and so much the worse, if it be the bite of vermin; and so much the better if it arouse the lions from their slumber."

Here Gwynplaine turned towards the kneeling under-clerks, who were writing on the fourth wool-sack.

"Who are those fellows kneeling down? What are you doing? Get up; you are men."

These words, suddenly addressed to inferiors of whose existence a lord ought not to be even conscious, increased the merriment to the utmost.

They had cried, "Bravo!" Now they shouted, "Hurrah!" From clapping their hands, they proceeded to stamping their feet. One might have been back in the Green Box, only that there the laughter was applause, here it was ridicule. The object of ridicule is to kill. Men's laughter sometimes exerts all its power to murder.

The laughter changed to action. Sneering words were rained upon him. Humour is the folly of assemblies. Their ingenious and foolish ridicule shuns facts instead of studying them, and ignores questions instead of solving them. Any extraordinary occurrence is a point of interrogation; to laugh at it is like laughing at an enigma. But the Sphinx, which never laughs, is behind it.

Conflicting shouts of "Enough! enough!—Encore! encore!" arose.

William Farmer, Baron Leimpster, flung at Gwynplaine the insult cast by Rye Quiney at Shakspeare:

" 'Histrio mima!'"

Lord Vaughan, a sententious man, twenty-ninth on the barons' bench, exclaimed:—

"We must be back in the days when animals had the gift of speech. In the midst of human tongues the jaw of a beast has spoken."

"Listen to Balaam's ass," added Lord Yarmouth.

Lord Yarmouth presented that appearance of sagacity produced by a round nose and a crooked mouth.

"The rebel Linnæus is chastised in his tomb. The son is the punishment of the father," said John Hough, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, at whose prebendary Gwynplaine's attack had glanced.

"He lies!" said Lord Cholmondeley, the legislator so well read up in the law. "What he calls torture is only the *peine forte et dure*, and a very good thing, too. Torture is not practised in England."

Thomas Wentworth, Baron Raby, addressed the Chancellor:—

"My Lord Chancellor, adjourn the House."

"No, no. Let him go on. He is amusing. Hurrah! hip! hip! hurrah!"

Thus shouted the young lords, their mirth amounting to positive frenzy. Four of them were especially hilarious. These were Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester; Thomas Tufton, Earl of Thanet; Viscount Hutton; and the Duke of Montagu.

"Go on with your tricks, Gwynplaine!" cried Rochester.

"Put him out, put him out!" shouted Thanet.

Viscount Hatton drew from his pocket a penny, which he flung to Gwynplaine.

And John Campbell, Earl of Greenwich; Savage, Earl Rivers; Thompson, Baron Haversham; Warrington, Escrick, Rolleston, Rockingham, Carteret, Langdale, Barcester, Maynard, Hunsdon, Caërnarvon, Cavendish, Burlington, Robert Darcy, Earl of Holderness, Otho Windsor, Earl of Plymouth, applauded.

There was a tumult as of pandemonium, in which the words of Gwynplaine were lost.

Amid it all, but one word of Gwynplaine's was audible: "Beware!"

Ralph, Duke of Montagu, recently down from Oxford, and still a beardless youth, descended from the bench of dukes, where he sat the nineteenth in order, and placed himself in front of Gwynplaine, with his arms folded. In a sword there is a spot which cuts sharpest, and in a voice an accent which insults most keenly. Montagu spoke with that accent, and sneering with his face close to that of Gwynplaine, shouted, —

"What are you talking about?"

"I am prophesying," said Gwynplaine.

The laughter exploded anew; and below this laughter, anger growled a continuous bass. One of the minors, Lionel Cranfield Sackville, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex, stood up on his seat, not smiling, but grave as became a future legislator, and, without saying a word, looked at Gwynplaine with his fresh twelve-year-old face, and shrugged his shoulders. Whereat the Bishop of St. Asaph's whispered in the ear of the Bishop of St. David's, who was sitting beside him, as he pointed to Gwynplaine, "There is the fool;" then pointing to the child, "there is the sage."

A chorus of complaint was heard amid the general confusion.

"Gorgon face!" — "What does it all mean?" — "An insult to the House!" — "The fellow ought to be put

out!" — "What a madman!" — "Shame! shame!" — "Adjourn the House!" — "No; let him finish his speech!" — "Talk away, you buffoon!"

Lord Lewis Duras, with his arms a-kimbo, shouted: "Ah! it does one good to laugh. My spleen is cured. I propose a vote of thanks in these terms: 'The House of Lords returns thanks to the Green Box.'"

Gwynplaine, it may be remembered, had dreamt of a different welcome.

A man who, climbing up a steep and crumbling acclivity above a giddy precipice, has felt it giving way under his hands, his nails, his elbows, his knees, his feet; who — losing instead of gaining on his treacherous way, a prey to every terror, slipping back instead of ascending, increasing the certainty of his fall by his very efforts to gain the summit, and losing ground in every struggle for safety — has felt the abyss approaching nearer and nearer, until the certainty of his fall into the yawning jaws, open to receive him, has frozen the marrow of his bones; — that man has experienced the sensations of Gwynplaine.

He felt the ground he had ascended crumbling under him, and his audience was the precipice.

There is always some one to say the word which sums all up.

Lord Scarsdale expressed the feelings of the entire assemblage in one exclamation:—

"What is that monster doing here?"

Gwynplaine stood up, dismayed and indignant, in a sort of final protest. He looked at them all fixedly.

"What am I doing here? I have come to be a warning to you! I am a monster, you say? No! I am the people! I am an exception? No! I am the rule; you are the exception! You are the chimera; I am the reality! I am the frightful man who laughs! Who laughs at

what? At you, at himself, at everything! What is his laugh? Your crime and his torment! That crime he flings at your head! That punishment he casts in your face! I laugh, and that means I weep!"

He paused. There was less noise. The laughter continued, but it was more subdued. He may have fancied that he had regained a certain amount of attention. He breathed again, and resumed:—

"This laugh which is on my face a king placed there. This laugh expresses the desolation of mankind. This laugh means hate, enforced silence, rage, despair. This laugh was produced by torture. This laugh is forced. If Satan were marked with this laugh, it would convict God. But the Eternal is not like them that perish. Being absolute, he is just; and God hates the injustice of kings. Oh! you take me for an exception; but I am a symbol. Oh, all-powerful men, fools that you are! open your eyes. I am the incarnation of All. I represent humanity as its masters have made it. Mankind is mutilated. That which has been done to me has been done to all. In the lower classes, right, justice, truth, reason, intelligence, have been deformed, as eyes, nostrils, and ears have been deformed in me; their hearts have been made a sink of passion and pain, like mine, and their features, like mine, have been hidden in a mask of joy. Where God had placed his finger, the king set his sign-manual. Monstrous superposition! Bishops, peers, and princes, the people is a sea of suffering, smiling on the surface. My lords, I tell you that the people are what I am. To-day you oppress them; to-day you hoot at me. But there will come an ominous thaw, in which that which was as stone will become wave. A crack in the ice, and all is over. There will come an hour when a convulsion will break down your oppression; when an angry roar will reply to your jeers. Nay, that hour did

come! Thou wert of it, O my father! That hour of God did come, and was called the Republic! It was destroyed, but it will return. Meanwhile, remember that the line of kings armed with the sword was broken by Cromwell, armed with the axe. Tremble! The solution of the problem is at hand: the talons which were cut are growing again; the tongues which were torn out are floating in the air; they are turning to tongues of fire, and, scattered by the breath of darkness, are shouting through infinity; those who hunger are showing their teeth; false firmaments, built over real hells, are tottering. The people are suffering — they are suffering; and the mountains above are tottering, the chasm below is yawning. Darkness demands its change to light; the damned are discussing the elect. Behold! the coming of the people is at hand, the elevation of mankind, the beginning of the end, the red dawn of the catastrophe! Yes, all these things are in this laugh of mine, at which you sneer to-day! London is one perpetual *fête*. Be it so. England rings with acclamations from end to end. Well! but listen. You have your *fêtes*, — they are my laugh; you have your public rejoicings, — they are my laugh; you have your weddings, consecrations, and coronations, — they are my laugh. The births of your princes are my laugh. But above you is the thunder-bolt, — that too is my laugh."

How could they stand such nonsense? The laughter burst out afresh; and now it was overwhelming. Of all the lava which that crater, the human mouth, ejects, the most corrosive is ridicule. Ridicule is a contagion which no crowd can resist. All executions do not take place on the scaffold; and men, from the moment they are assembled in a body, whether in mobs or in senates, have always a ready executioner among them, called sarcasm. There is no torture to be compared to that of

the wretch condemned to execution by ridicule. This was Gwynplaine's fate. He was stoned with their jokes, and riddled by the scoffs shot at him. He stood there a mark for all. They sprang up; they cried "Encore;" they shook with laughter; they stamped their feet; they pulled each other's bands. The majesty of the place, the chaste ermine, the dignity of the wigs, had no effect. The lords laughed, the bishops laughed, the judges laughed, the old men derided, the youths' benches were in convulsions. The Archbishop of Canterbury nudged the Archbishop of York; Henry Compton, Bishop of London, brother of Lord Northampton, held his sides; the Lord Chancellor bowed his head, probably to conceal his inclination to laugh; and, at the bar, that statue of respect, the Usher of the Black Rod, was laughing also.

Gwynplaine had folded his arms; and, surrounded by all those faces, young and old, from which this grand Homeric jubilee had burst forth; in that whirlwind of clapping hands, of stamping feet, and of wild hurrahs; in that mad buffoonery of which he was the centre; in that splendid overflow of hilarity; in the midst of that unmeasured gaiety, — he felt the very bitterness of death. All was over. He could no longer master the face which betrayed, nor the audience which insulted him.

That eternal and fatal law, by which the grotesque is linked with the sublime — by which the laugh re-echoes the groan, parody rides behind despair, and seeming is opposed to being — had never been more forcibly exemplified. Never had a more sinister light illumined the depths of human darkness.

Gwynplaine was assisting at the final destruction of his destiny by a burst of laughter. This was now irremediable. Having fallen, we can raise ourselves up;

but being pulverized, never. Their insulting and contemptuous mockery had reduced him to dust.

Everything depends upon one's surroundings. That which was triumph in the Green Box was disgrace and catastrophe in the House of Lords. What was applause there was insult here. He felt something like the reverse side of his mask. On one side of that mask he had the sympathy of the people, who welcomed Gwynplaine; on the other, the contempt of the great, spurning Lord Fermain Clancharlie. On one side, attraction; on the other, repulsion; both leading him to ruin. He felt himself, as it were, stabbed from behind. Fate deals treacherous blows. Everything will be explained hereafter, but, in the mean time, destiny is a snare, and man sinks into its pitfalls. He had expected to triumph, and was greeted with laughter. Such apotheoses have lugubrious terminations. There is a dreary expression, — to be sobered; tragical wisdom born of drunkenness! In the midst of that tempest of gaiety mingled with ferocity, Gwynplaine fell into a reverie.

An assembly in mad merriment drifts as chance directs, and loses its compass when it gives itself up to laughter. None knew whither they were tending, or what they were doing.

The House was obliged to rise, adjourned by the Lord Chancellor, "owing to extraordinary circumstances," to the next day. The peers broke up. They bowed to the royal throne and departed. Echoes of prolonged laughter were heard dying away in the corridors.

Assemblies, besides their official doors, have — under tapestry, under projections, and under arches — all sorts of hidden doors, by which the members escape like water through the cracks in a vase.

In a short time the chamber was deserted. This takes place quickly and almost imperceptibly, and these

places, so lately full of commotion, suddenly relapse into silence.

Reverie carries one far; and one by long dreaming seems to reach, as it were, another planet.

Gwynplaine suddenly awoke from such a dream. He was alone. The chamber was empty. He had not even observed that the House had been adjourned. All the peers had departed, even his sponsors. There only remained here and there some of the lower officers of the House, waiting for his lordship to depart before they put the covers on, and extinguished the lights.

Mechanically he placed his hat on his head, and leaving his seat, directed his steps to the great door opening into the gallery. As he was passing through the opening, a door-keeper relieved him of his peer's robes. He was scarcely conscious of the fact. In another instant, he was in the gallery.

The officials who remained, noticed with astonishment that the peer had gone out without bowing to the throne!

CHAPTER VIII.

HE WOULD BE A GOOD BROTHER, WERE HE NOT A
GOOD SON.

THERE was no one in the gallery.

Gwynplaine crossed the circular space, from whence they had removed the arm-chair and the tables, and where no trace of his investiture now remained. Can-delabra and lustres, placed at certain intervals, marked the way out. Thanks to this row of lights, he retraced without difficulty, through the suite of saloons and galleries, the way which he had followed on his arrival with the King-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod. He saw no one, except here and there some old lord plodding heavily along in front of him.

Suddenly, in the silence of those great deserted rooms, bursts of excited exclamations reached him, — a sort of nocturnal tumult unusual in such a place. He directed his steps to the place whence this noise proceeded, and found himself in a spacious hall, dimly lighted, which was one of the exits from the House of Lords. He saw a great glass door open, a flight of steps, footmen and links, a square outside, and a few coaches waiting at the bottom of the steps. This was the spot from which the noise which he had heard proceeded.

Within the door, and under the hall lamp, was a noisy group of men, shouting and gesticulating. Gwynplaine approached through the gloom. They were quarrelling. On one side there were ten or twelve young lords, who

wanted to go out; on the other, a man with his hat on, like themselves, upright and with a haughty brow, who barred their passage.

This man was Tom-Jim-Jack.

Some of these lords were still in their robes, others had thrown them off, and were in their usual attire. Tom-Jim-Jack wore a hat with plumes, — not white, like the peers; but green, tipped with orange. He was embroidered and decked with gold lace from head to foot, had flowing bows of ribbon and lace round his wrists and neck, and was feverishly fingering with his left hand the hilt of the sword which hung from his waist-belt, and on the scabbard of which an admiral's anchors were chased.

It was he who was speaking, addressing himself to the young lords; and Gwynplaine overheard the following:

"I told you you were cowards. You wish me to withdraw my words. So be it. You are not cowards; you are idiots. You all combined against one man. Was not that cowardice? All right. Then it was stupidity. He spoke to you, and you did not understand him. Here, the old are hard of hearing and the young devoid of intelligence. I am one of your own order to quite sufficient extent to tell you the truth. This new-comer is peculiar, and he has uttered a heap of nonsense, I admit; but amid all that nonsense there were some things which were true. His speech was incoherent, undigested, poorly delivered. Be it so. He repeated 'You know, you know,' too often; but a man who was but yesterday a clown at a fair cannot be expected to speak like Aristotle or like Doctor Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury. The vermin, the lions, the address to the under-clerks, — all that was in bad taste. Who says it was n't? It was an excited, fragmentary and topsy-turvy harangue; but here and there came out facts which were true. It is no small

thing to speak even as he did, seeing it is not his trade. I should like to see you do it. Yes; you! What he said about the lepers at Burton Lazars is an undeniable fact. Besides, he is not the first man who has talked nonsense. In short, my lords, I do not like to see the many set upon one. Such is my humour; and I ask your lordships' permission to take offence. You have displeased me; I am angry. I am grateful to God for having drawn up from the depths of degradation this peer of England, and for having given back his inheritance to the heir; and, without heeding whether it will or will not affect my own affairs, I consider it a fine sight to see an insect transformed into an eagle, and Gwynplaine into Lord Clancharlie. My lords, I forbid you to hold any opinion but mine. I regret that Lord Lewis Duras should not be here. I should like to insult him. My lords, it is Fermain Clancharlie who has been the peer, and you who have been the mountebanks. As for his laugh, it is not his fault. You have laughed at that laugh; men should not laugh at misfortune. If you think that people cannot laugh at you as well, you are very much mistaken. You are ugly. You are badly dressed. My Lord Haversham, I saw your mistress the other day; she is hideous, — a duchess, but a monkey. Gentlemen who laugh, I repeat that I should like to hear you try to say four consecutive words! Many men jabber; very few speak. You fancy you know something, because you have spent a few idle years at Oxford or Cambridge, and because, before being peers of England on the benches of Westminster, you have been asses on the benches at Gonville and Caius. Here I am; and I choose to tell you the truth to your faces. You have just been impudent to this new peer, — a monster, certainly; but a monster at the mercy of beasts. I had rather be that man than you. I was present at the sitting, in my place

as possible heir to a peerage. I heard all. I have not the right to speak; but I have the right to be a gentleman. Your jeering airs annoyed me. That is the reason why I have waited for you at the door. We must have a few words, for we have some arrangements to make. Does it not strike you that you failed a little in respect towards myself? My lords, I entertain a firm determination to kill a few of you. All you who are here, — Thomas Tufton, Earl of Thanet; Savage, Earl Rivers; Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland; Laurence Hyde, Earl of Rochester; you Barons, Gray of Rolleston, Cary Hunsdon, Eserick, Rockingham, little Carteret; Robert Darcy, Earl of Holderness; William, Viscount Hutton; and Ralph, Duke of Montagu; and any who choose, I, David Dirry-Moir, an officer of the fleet, summon, call, and command you to provide yourselves, in all haste, with seconds and umpires, and I will meet you face to face and hand to hand, to-night, at once, to-morrow, by day or night, by sunlight or by candle-light, where, when, and how you please, so long as there is only two sword-lengths' space; and you will do well to look to the flints of your pistols and the edges of your rapiers, for it is my firm intention to cause many vacancies in the peerage. Ogle Cavendish, take your measures, and think of your motto, *Cavendo tutus*; Marmaduke Langdale, you would do well to order a coffin to be brought with you, like your ancestor, Grindold. George Booth, Earl of Warrington, you will never again see the County Palatine of Chester, or your labyrinth like that of Crete, or the high towers of Dunham Massy! As for Lord Vaughan, he is young enough to talk impertinently, and too old to answer for it, so I shall hold his nephew Richard Vaughan, Member of Parliament for the Borough of Merioneth accountable for his words. As for you, John Campbell, Earl of Greenwich, I will kill you as Achon killed Matas; but with a fair cut,

and not from behind, it being my custom to present my heart and not my back to the point of the sword. I have spoken my mind, my lords. And so use witchcraft, if you like. Consult the fortune-tellers. Grease your skins with ointments and drugs to make them invulnerable; hang round your necks charms of the devil or the virgin; I will fight you blest or cursed, and I will not even have you searched to see if you have any amulets upon you. On foot or on horseback, on the high road if you wish it, in Piccadilly, or at Charing Cross; and they shall take up the pavement for our meeting, as they unpaved the court of the Louvre for the duel between Guise and Bassompierre. All of you! Do you hear? I mean to fight you all. Dormer, Earl of Caërnarvon, I will make you swallow my sword up to the hilt, as Marolles did Lisle Marivaux, and then we shall see, my lords, whether you will laugh or not. You, Burlington, who look like a girl of seventeen, you shall choose between the lawn of your house in Middlesex, and your beautiful garden at Londesborough, in Yorkshire, to be buried in. I beg to inform your lordships that it does not suit me to allow your insolence in my presence. I will chastise you, my lords. I take it ill that you should have ridiculed Lord Fermain Clancharlie. He is worth more than you. As Clancharlie, he has rank, as you have; as Gwynplaine, he has intellect, which you have not. I make his cause my cause: insult to him insult to me, and your ridicule my wrath. We shall see who will come out of this affair alive, because I challenge you to the death. Do you understand? With any weapon, in any fashion, and you shall choose the death that pleases you best; and since you are clowns as well as gentlemen, I proportion my defiance to your qualities, and I give you your choice of any way in which a man can be killed, from the sword of the prince to the fist of the blackguard."

To this furious onslaught of words, the whole group of young noblemen responded with contemptuous smiles.

"Agreed," they said.

"I choose pistols," said Burlington.

"I," said Eserick, "the ancient combat of the lists, with the mace and the dagger."

"I," said Holderness, "the duel with two knives, long and short, stripped to the waist, and breast to breast."

"Lord David," said the Earl of Thanet, "you are a Scot. I choose the claymore."

"I, the sword," said Rockingham.

"I," said Duke Ralph, "prefer fists."

Gwynplaine came out of the shadow. He directed his steps towards him whom he had hitherto called Tom-Jim-Jack, but in whom now, however, he began to perceive something more.

"I thank you," said he, "but this is my business."

Every head turned towards him.

Gwynplaine advanced. He felt himself drawn towards the man whom he heard called Lord David, — his defender, and perhaps something nearer. Lord David drew back.

"Oh!" said he. "It is you, is it? This is well-timed. I have a word for you as well. Just now you spoke of a woman, who, after having loved Lord Linnæus Clancharlie, loved Charles II."

"It is true."

"Sir, you insulted my mother."

"Your mother!" cried Gwynplaine. "In that case, as I guessed, we are —"

"Brothers," answered Lord David, and he struck Gwynplaine full in the face.

"We are brothers," said he; "so we can fight. One can only fight one's equal; and who is one's equal if not one's brother? I will send you my seconds; to-morrow we will cut each other's throats."

BOOK IX.

IN RUINS.



CHAPTER I.

IT IS THROUGH EXCESS OF GREATNESS THAT MAN
REACHES EXCESS OF MISERY.

AS midnight tolled from St. Paul's, a man who had just crossed London Bridge struck into the lanes of Southwark. There were no lamps lighted, it being at that time the custom in London, as in Paris, to extinguish the street-lamps at eleven o'clock, — that is, to put them out just as they became necessary. The streets were dark and deserted. When the lamps are out, men stay in. He whom we speak of advanced with hurried strides. He was strangely dressed for walking at such an hour. He wore a coat of embroidered silk, a sword by his side, a hat with white plumes, and no cloak. The watchmen, as they saw him pass, said, "It is a lord walking for a wager," and they moved out of his way with the respect due to a lord and to a better.

This man was Gwynplaine.

He was making his escape.

Where was he? He did not know. We have said that the soul has its cyclones, — fearful whirlwinds, in which heaven, the sea, day, night, life, death, are all

mingled in unintelligible horror. It can no longer distinguish Truth; it is crushed by things in which it does not believe. All becomes chaos. The firmament pales. Infinity is empty. The mind of the sufferer wanders. He feels himself dying. He craves for a star. What did Gwynplaine feel? a thirst,—a thirst to see Dea.

He was conscious only of that craving. To reach the Green Box again, and the Tadcaster Inn, with its noise and lights, full of the cordial laughter of the people; to find Ursus and Homo, to see Dea again, to re-enter life.

Disillusion, like a bow, shoots its arrow, man, towards the True. Gwynplaine hastened on. He approached Tarrinzeau Field. He no longer walked now, he ran. His eyes pierced the darkness before him. His glance preceded him, eagerly seeking his goal. What a moment it would be for him when he should see the lighted windows of the Tadcaster Inn again.

He reached the bowling-green. He turned the corner of the wall, and saw before him, at the other end of the field, some distance off, the inn,—the only house, it will be remembered, in the field where the fair was held.

He looked. There was no light; nothing but a dark mass there.

He shuddered. Then he said to himself that it was late; that the tavern was shut up, as was very natural; that every one was asleep; that he had only to awaken Nicless or Govicum; that he must go up to the inn and knock at the door. He did so, no longer running now, but rushing wildly.

He reached the inn, breathless. It is when struggling in the invisible convulsions of the soul until he knows not whether he is in life or in death, that all the delicacy of a man's affection for his loved ones, being yet unimpaired, proves a heart true. When all else is swallowed up, tenderness still floats unshattered.

He approached the inn as noiselessly as possible. He recognized the nook, the old dog kennel, where Govicum used to sleep. In it, contiguous to the lower room, was a window overlooking the field. Gwynplaine tapped softly on the pane. It would suffice to awaken Govicum, he thought. There was no sound in Govicum's room.

"At his age," said Gwynplaine, "a boy sleeps soundly."

With the back of his hand he knocked gently against the window. Nothing stirred.

He knocked louder twice. Still nothing stirred. Then, feeling somewhat uneasy, he went to the door of the inn and knocked. No one answered. He reflected, and a cold shudder began to creep over him.

"Master Nicless is old, children sleep soundly, and old men heavily. Courage! louder!"

He had tapped, he had knocked, he had kicked the door; now he flung himself against it.

This recalled to him a vague recollection of Weymouth, where, as a child, he had carried Dea, an infant, in his arms.

He battered the door again violently, like a lord, which, alas! he was.

The house remained silent. He felt that he was losing his senses. He no longer thought of caution. He shouted:—

"Nicless! Govicum!"

At the same time he looked up at the windows, to see if any light was visible. But the inn was blank. Not a voice, not a sound, not a glimmer of light. He went to the gate and knocked at it, kicked against it, and shook it, crying out wildly:—

"Ursus! Homo!"

The wolf did not bark.

A cold sweat stood in drops upon his brow. He glanced around him. The night was dark; but there

were stars enough to render the fair-ground visible. He saw — a melancholy sight to him — that everything on it had vanished.

Not a single van was visible. The circus was gone. Not a tent, not a booth, not a cart remained. The strollers, with their thousand noisy cries, who had swarmed there, had given place to a dark and sullen void.

All were gone.

A frantic anxiety took possession of him. What did this mean? What had happened? Was no one left? Could it be that everything connected with his past life had crumbled away behind him? What had happened to them all? Good heavens! He rushed like a tempest against the house. He pounded on the small door, the gate, the windows, the window-shutters, the walls, with fists and feet, furious with terror and agony of mind.

He called Nicless, Govicum, Fibi, Vinos, Ursus, Homo. He tried every shout and every sound against this wall. At times he waited and listened; but the house remained mute and dead. Then, exasperated, he began again with blows, shouts, and repeated knockings, re-echoed all around. It might have been thunder trying to awake the grave.

There is a certain stage of fright in which a man becomes terrible. He who fears everything, fears nothing. He would do battle with the Sphinx. He defies the Unknown.

Gwynplaine renewed the attack in every possible form, stopping, resuming, unwearying in the shouts and appeals with which he assailed the tragic silence. He called a thousand times on the names of those who should have been there. He shrieked out every name except that of Dea, — a precaution which he could not have explained to himself, but which instinct inspired even in his distraction.

Having exhausted calls and cries, nothing was left but to break in.

"I must enter the house," he said to himself; "but how?"

He broke a pane of glass in Govicum's room by thrusting his hand through it, tearing the flesh; he drew the bolt of the sash and opened the window. Perceiving that his sword was in the way, he tore it off angrily, — scabbard, blade, and belt, — and flung it on the pavement. Then he raised himself by the inequalities in the wall, and, though the window was narrow, he managed to get through it. He entered the inn. Govicum's bed, dimly visible in its corner, was there; but Govicum was not in it. If Govicum was not in his bed, it was evident that Nicless could not be in his.

The whole house was dark. He felt in that shadowy interior the mysterious immobility of emptiness, and that vague fear which signifies, "There is no one here."

Wild with anxiety, Gwynplaine crossed the lower room, knocking against the tables, upsetting the earthenware, throwing down the benches, tumbling over the jugs, and, striding over the furniture, reached the door leading into the court, and broke it open with one blow from his knee, which sprung the lock. The door turned on its hinges. He looked into the court. The Green Box was no longer there.

Gwynplaine breaking into Tadcaster Inn.

Etched by H. Lefort. — From drawing
by François Flameng.



CHAPTER II.

THE DREGS.

GWYNPLAINE left the house, and began to explore Tarrinzeau Field in every direction. He explored every place where the tents and vans had stood the day before. He knocked at the booths, though he knew well that they were uninhabited. He pounded on everything that looked like a door or a window. Not a voice arose from the darkness. Something like death seemed to have settled down upon the place.

The ant-hill had been razed. The threats of the authorities had evidently been carried out. There had been what, in our days, would be called a raid. Tarrinzeau Field was worse than a desert; it had been scoured, and every corner of it scratched up, as it were, by pitiless claws. The unfortunate fair-green had been turned inside out, and completely emptied.

Gwynplaine, after having carefully searched every inch of ground, left the green, struck into the crooked streets abutting on the site called East Point, and directed his steps towards the Thames.

He had threaded his way through a net-work of lanes, bounded only by walls and hedges, when he suddenly felt the fresh breeze from the water, heard the dull lapping of the river, and saw a parapet in front of him. It was the parapet of the Effroc Wall.

This parapet bounded a part of the quay, which was very short and very narrow. Under it, the high wall extended straight down to the dark water below.

Gwynplaine walked to the parapet, and leaning his elbows on it, rested his head in his hands, and fixed his eyes on the depths below.

Did he see the water? No. Then at what was he gazing? At the shadow,—not the shadow below, but within him. In the melancholy landscape, which he scarcely noticed; in the outer depths, which his eyes did not pierce,—were the blurred outlines of masts and spars. Below the Effroc Wall there was nothing on the river; but the quay sloped insensibly downwards till, some distance off, it met a pier, at which several vessels were lying, some of which had just arrived, while others were on the point of departure. These vessels were connected with the shore by little jetties, constructed for the purpose, some of stone, some of wood, or by movable gangways. All of them, whether moored to the jetties or at anchor, were wrapt in silence. There was no noise or stir on board, it being a habit of sailors to sleep when they can, and wake only when wanted. If any of the craft were to sail at high tide that night, the crews were not yet awake.

The hulls, like huge black bubbles, and the rigging, like threads mingled with ladders, were barely visible. All was dim and confused. Here and there a red light pierced the gloom.

Gwynplaine saw nothing of all this. What he was musing on was destiny.

He was in a dream,—a vision,—giddy in presence of an inexorable reality.

He fancied that he heard something like an earthquake behind him,—it was the laughter of the lords.

He had just emerged from that ordeal. He had come out of it, having received a blow, and from whom?

From his own brother!

Flying from the laughter, carrying the blow with him,

seeking refuge, a wounded bird, in his nest, rushing from hate and seeking love, what had he found?

Darkness. No one. Everything gone.

He compared this darkness with the brilliant dream in which he had indulged.

What a crumbling away!

Gwynplaine had just reached that grim region,—vacancy. The Green Box gone, the universe too had vanished.

What could have happened? Where were they? They had evidently been carried away. The decree of fortune which had made him great had annulled the only friends he had in the world. It was almost certain that he would never see them again. Precautions had been taken against that. They had cleared the fair-green, beginning with Nicless and Govicum, so that he should gain no clew through them. Inexorable dispersion! That fearful social system, at the same time that it pulverized him in the House of Lords, crushed them in their little cabin. They were lost; Dea was lost,—lost to him forever. Powers of heaven! where was she? And he had not been there to defend her!

To make conjectures concerning the absent whom we love, is to put one's self to the torture. He inflicted this torture on himself. But every supposition which he made, caused him to groan with agony.

Through a succession of bitter reflections he remembered a man who was evidently fatal to him, and who had called himself Barkilphedro. That man had inscribed on his brain an ominous sentence which reappeared now. He had written in such flaming ink that each letter seemed formed of fire, the enigmatical words, the meaning of which was now only too apparent: "Destiny never opens one door without closing another."

All was over. The final shadows had gathered around

him. In every man's fate there may be an end of the world so far as he is concerned. This is called despair.

This, then, was what he had come to.

The cloud had passed. He had been mingled with it. It had lain heavily on his eyes, it had disordered his brain. He had been blinded outwardly, intoxicated inwardly. This had lasted but for a brief moment. Then everything melted away, the cloud and his life as well. Awaking from the dream, he found himself alone.

All vanished, all gone, all lost. Night. Nothingness. Such was his horizon.

He was alone.

Alone has a synonym; it is *dead*. Despair is a good accountant. It sets itself to find the sum total, it adds up everything, even to the farthings. It charges Heaven with its thunder-bolts and its pin-pricks, alike. It tries to find out what it has to expect from fate. It argues, weighs, and calculates, outwardly cool, while the burning lava is flowing fiercely within.

Gwynplaine examined himself, and examined his fate.

The backward glance of thought,—terrible recapitulation!

When we are at the top of a mountain, we gaze down the precipice; when we are at its base, we look up at heaven. And we say, I was there.

Gwynplaine was in the very lowest depths of misery. How sudden, too, had been his fall!

Such is the hideous swiftness of misfortune, although it is so heavy that we might fancy it slow. But no! It would likewise appear from its whiteness, snow should possess the immobility of a winding-sheet; yet this is contradicted by the avalanche.

The avalanche is snow transformed into a devouring furnace. It remains frozen, but it devours nevertheless.

The avalanche had enveloped Gwynplaine. He had been torn like a rag, uprooted like a tree, precipitated like a stone. He recalled all the circumstances of his fall. He put questions to himself and returned answers. There is no judge so searching as conscience conducting its own trial.

How much remorse was mingled with his despair? This he wished to find out, and dissected his conscience. Excruciating vivisection!

His absence had caused a catastrophe. But had this absence depended on him? In all that had happened, had he been a free agent? No! He had felt himself captive. What was that which had arrested and detained him,—a prison? No. A chain? No. What then? Lust! He had sunk into the slough of greatness.

To whom has it not happened to be free in appearance, yet to feel that his wings are hampered?

There had been something like a snare spread for him. What is at first temptation, ends in captivity.

Nevertheless (and his conscience pressed him on this point) had he merely submitted to the inevitable? No; he had welcomed it.

Force had been used with him to a certain extent, it is true; but he, to a certain extent, had yielded. To have allowed himself to be carried off was not his fault; but to have allowed himself to be thus inebriated, was his weakness. There had been a moment—a decisive moment—when the question was put to him. This Barkilphedro had placed an alternative before Gwynplaine, and had given him full power to decide his fate by a word. Gwynplaine might have said, "No." He had said, "Yes."

From that "Yes," uttered in a moment of weakness, all this misery had come. Gwynplaine realized this now in the bitter after-taste of that consent.

Nevertheless, — for he debated with himself, — was it then so great a crime to take possession of his rights, of his patrimony, of his heritage, of his home; and, as a patrician, of the rank of his ancestors, as an orphan of the name of his father? What had he accepted? A restitution. Made by whom? By Providence.

Then his mind revolted. Senseless acceptance! What a bargain he had made, what a foolish exchange! He had trafficked with Providence at a loss. For an income of £80,000 a year; for seven or eight titles; for ten or twelve palaces; for houses in town, and castles in the country; for a hundred lackeys; for packs of hounds, and carriages, and armorial bearings; to be a judge and legislator; for a coronet and purple robes, like a king; to be a baron and a marquis; to be a Peer of England, he had given the humble home of Ursus and the smile of Dea. For shipwreck and destruction in the surging immensity of greatness, he had bartered happiness. For the ocean he had given the pearl. O madman! O fool! O dupe!

Nevertheless, — and here the objection seemed based on firmer ground, — everything connected with this wonderful good fortune which had befallen him had not been reprehensible. Perhaps there would have been selfishness in renunciation; perhaps he had only done his duty in the acceptance. Suddenly transformed into a lord, what ought he to have done? Such complications are apt to create perplexity of mind. This had been the case with him. Duty gave conflicting orders. Duty on both sides at once, duty multiple and contradictory; this was the bewilderment which he had suffered. It was this that had paralyzed him, especially when he had not refused to take the journey from Corleone Lodge to the House of Lords. What we call rising in life is leaving the safe for the dangerous path. Which is, henceforth,

the straight line? Towards whom is our first duty? Is it towards those nearest to ourselves, or is it towards mankind generally? Do we not cease to belong to our own circumscribed circle, and become part of the great family of men? As we ascend, we feel an increased strain on our virtue. The higher we rise, the greater this strain becomes. The increase of privileges entails an increase of duty. We come to many by-ways, phantom roads perchance, and we imagine that we see the finger of conscience pointing each one of them out to us. Which shall we take? Change our direction, remain where we are, advance, go back? What are we to do? That there should be cross-roads in conscience is strange enough; but responsibility may become a labyrinth.

And when a man is imbued with an idea, when he is the incarnation of a fact, — when he is a symbolical man at the same time that he is a man of flesh and blood, — is not the responsibility even more oppressive? Hence the care-laden docility and the dumb anxiety of Gwynplaine; hence his obedience when summoned to take his seat. A conscientious man is often a passive man. He had heard what he fancied was the command of duty. Was not that entrance into a place where oppression could be discussed and resisted the realization of one of his dearest aspirations? When he had been called upon to speak, — he, a living specimen of the despotic whims under which, for six thousand years, mankind has groaned in agony, — had he the right to refuse? Had he the right to withdraw his head from under the tongue of fire descending from on high upon him?

In this debate of conscience, what had he said to himself? This: "The people are silent. I will be the advocate of the silent; I will speak for the dumb; I will plead the cause of the poor before the great, of the weak before the powerful. This is the cause of my elevation.

God wills what he wills, and does it. It was a wonder that Harquanonne's flask, in which was the metamorphosis of Gwynplaine into Lord Clancharlie, should have floated for fifteen years on the ocean, on the billows, in the surf, through the storms, and that all the raging of the sea did it no harm. But I can see the reason. There are destinies with secret springs. I have the key of mine, and know its enigma. I am predestined; I have a mission. I will be the poor man's lord; I will plead for those who are dumb with despair; I will interpret inarticulate remonstrance; I will translate the mutterings, the groans, the murmurs, the voices of the crowd, their ill-expressed complaints, their unintelligible words, and those beast-like cries which ignorance and suffering put into men's mouths. The clamour of men is as inarticulate as the howling of the wind. They cry out, but they are not understood; so their cries become equivalent to silence, and silence with them means throwing down their arms. This forced disarmament calls for help. I will be their help; I will be the Denunciator; I will be the mouth-piece of the people. Thanks to me, they shall be understood. This will be fine, indeed."

Yes; it is fine to plead for the dumb; but to plead to the deaf is disheartening. And that was the second scene in the drama.

Alas! he had failed irremediably.

The elevation in which he had believed, the high fortune, had melted away like a mirage. And what a fall! To be drowned in a surge of laughter!

He had fancied himself strong, he who, for so many years, had floated with observant mind on the wide sea of suffering; he who had brought back out of the great shadow so touching a cry. He had been dashed against that huge rock, the heartlessness of the fortunate. He had believed himself an avenger; he was but a clown.

He thought that he wielded a thunder-bolt; he could only excite mirth. In place of emotion, he met with mockery. He sobbed; they shouted with laughter; and under that gaiety he had sunk, fatally submerged.

And what had they laughed at? At his laugh.

So that trace of an execrable act, of which he must bear the mark forever, — the stigma of laughter, image of the sham contentment of nations under their oppressors; that mask of joy produced by torture; that grimace which he carried on his features; the scar which signified “*Jussu regis*,” the attestation of a crime committed by the king towards him, and the symbol of crime committed by royalty towards the people, — that it was which had triumphed over him; that it was which had overwhelmed him; so the accusation against the executioner turned into sentence upon the victim. What a shameful withholding of justice! Royalty, having got the better of his father, had also got the better of him! The evil that had been done had served as pretext and as motive for the evil that remained to be done. Against whom were the lords incensed? Against the torturer? No. Against the tortured. Here is the throne; there, the people. Here, James II.; there, Gwynplaine. That confrontation, indeed, brought to light an outrage and a crime. What was the outrage? Disfigurement. What was the crime? Suffering. Let misery hide itself in silence, otherwise it becomes treason. And those men who had dragged Gwynplaine on the hurdle of sarcasm, were they wicked? No; but they, too, had their fatality, — they were happy. They were executioners, ignorant of the fact. They were good-humoured; they saw no use in Gwynplaine. He tore out his heart to show to them, and they cried, “Go on with your play!” But — sharpest sting! — he had laughed himself. The frightful chain which bound down his soul hindered his thoughts from rising to his face. His

disfigurement extended even to his senses ; and, while his conscience was indignant, his face gave it the lie, and jested. Then all was over. He was the laughing man, the caryatid of the weeping world. He was an agony petrified in hilarity, carrying the weight of a universe of calamity, and walled up forever by the gaiety, the ridicule, and the amusement of others. Of all the Oppressed, of whom he was the Incarnation, his was the most odious fate. They jeered at his distress ; to them he was but an extraordinary buffoon lifted out of some frightful condensation of misery, escaped from his prison, changed to a deity, risen from the dregs of the people to the foot of the throne, mingling with the stars, and who, having once amused the damned, now amused the elect. All that was in him of generosity, of enthusiasm, of eloquence, of heart, of soul, of fury, of anger, of love, of inexpressible grief, ended in — a burst of laughter ! And he proved, as he had told the Lords, that this was not the exception, but that it was the normal, ordinary, universal, unlimited, sovereign fact, so amalgamated with the routine of life that they took no account of it. The hungry pauper laughs, the beggar laughs, the felon laughs, the prostitute laughs, the orphan laughs to gain his bread ; the slave laughs, the soldier laughs, the people laugh. Society is so constituted that sin and want and each and every catastrophe, fever, ulcer, and pang, is resolved on the surface of the abyss into one frightful grin of joy. Now, he was the prototype of that universal grin ; that grin was himself. The law of Heaven, the unknown power which governs, had willed that a spectre, visible and palpable, a spectre of flesh and bone, should be the synopsis of the monstrous parody which we call the world ; and he was that spectre.

Immutable fate !

He had cried, " Have compassion on those who suffer ! "

In vain! He had striven to arouse pity, — he had only awakened horror. Such is the law of apparitions.

But though he was a spectre, he was also a man; here was the heartrending complication. A spectre without, a man within. More man than most, perhaps, since his twofold character was the type of all humanity. And he felt that humanity was at once present in him, and absent from him. There was something insurmountable in his existence. What was he? A disinherited heir? No; for he was a lord. Was he a lord? No; for he was a rebel. He was the light-bearer; a terrible spoilsport. He was not Satan, certainly; but he was Lucifer. His entrance, with his torch in his hand, was ominous. Ominous for whom? For the tyrant. Terrible to whom? To the terrible. Therefore, they rejected him. Enter their ranks, be accepted by them? Never! The obstacle which his face presented was frightful; but the obstacle which his ideas presented was still more insurmountable. His sentiments seemed to them more deformed than his face. He had no thought in common with the world of the great and powerful, in which by a freak of fate he had been born, and from which another freak of fate had expelled him. There was a mask between men and his face, and a wall between society and his mind. In mixing, from infancy, a wandering mountebank, with that strong rough element which we call the crowd, in saturating himself with the spirit of the multitude, and impregnating himself with the great soul of humanity, he had lost, in the common sense of the whole of mankind, the particular sense of the reigning classes. On their heights, he was impossible. He had reached them wet with water from the well of Truth; the odour of the abyss was on him. He was repugnant to those perfumed princes. To those who live on fiction, reality is disgusting; and one who thirsts for flattery spits out

the truth, when he has happened to drink it by mistake. What Gwynplaine brought them was not fit for their table. What was it? Reason, wisdom, justice; and they rejected it with disgust.

There were bishops there. He brought God into their presence. Who was this intruder?

The two poles repel each other. They can never amalgamate. Hence the result — a cry of wrath — when they were brought into juxtaposition: all the misery of mankind concentrated in one man brought face to face with all the pride and arrogance of mankind concentrated in a caste.

Abuse is useless. The truth should suffice; but Gwynplaine fully realized the entire futility of his effort. He had proved the deafness of those in high places. The privileged have no hearing on the side next the disinherited. Is it their fault? Alas! no. Forgive them! To be moved would be to abdicate. Expect nothing of lords and princes. One who is satisfied is inexorable. To those that have their fill, the hungry do not exist. The happy ignore and isolate themselves. On the threshold of their paradise, as on the threshold of hell, should be written, "Leave all hope behind."

Gwynplaine had met with the reception of a spectre entering the dwelling of the gods.

All that was within him rose in rebellion. No, he was no spectre, — he was a man. He told them, he shouted to them, that he was a man.

He was not a phantom; he was living flesh. He had a brain, and he thought; he had a heart, and he loved; he had a soul, and he hoped. Indeed, to have hoped overmuch was his whole crime.

Alas he had been foolish enough to believe in that thing, at once so brilliant and so ghastly, which is called

Society. He who had been without the pale so long, had entered it.

It had at once, and at first sight, made him its three offers, and given him its three gifts,—marriage, family, and caste. Marriage? He had seen prostitution on the threshold. Family? His brother had struck him, and would be awaiting him the next day, sword in hand. Caste? It had burst into laughter in his face, at him, the patrician; at him, the wretch. It had rejected almost before it had admitted him; so that his first three steps into the dense shadow of society had opened three gulfs beneath him.

And it was by a treacherous transformation that his disaster had begun; and catastrophe had approached him under the aspect of apotheosis!

Ascend had signified *descend*.

His fate was the reverse of Job's. It was through prosperity that adversity had reached him.

O tragical enigma of life! Behold what pitfalls! As a child, he had wrestled with the night, and proved himself the stronger; as a man, he had wrestled with destiny, and overcome it. Out of his very disfigurement he had achieved success; and out of misery, happiness. Of his exile he had made an asylum. A vagabond, like the birds of the air, he had found his crumb of bread. Alone and untutored, he had wrestled with the crowd, and made it his friend. An athlete, he had wrestled with that lion, the people, and tamed it. Unaided, he had battled against Want; he had faced the dreary necessity of living; and by amalgamating every joy of his heart with misery, he had at last converted poverty into riches. Just as he began to fancy himself the conqueror of life, he was suddenly attacked by fresh forces, proceeding from unknown depths; not with threats this time, but with smiles and caresses. Love, serpent-like

and sensual, had been revealed to him, who was blessed with angelic love. The flesh had tempted him, who had lived heretofore on the ideal. He had heard voluptuous words like cries of rage; he had felt the clasp of a woman's arms, like the convolutions of a snake. The fascinations of the false had succeeded the light of the true; for it is not the flesh that is real, but the soul. The flesh is ashes, the soul is flame. For the little circle which was allied to him by the relationship of poverty and toil, and which was his true and natural family, had been substituted the social family, — his family in blood, but of tainted blood; and even before he had entered it, he found himself face to face with an intended fratricide. Alas! he had allowed himself to be returned to that society, of which Brantôme (whom he had not read), said, "The son has a right to challenge his father!" A fatal chance had cried out to him, "Thou art not of the crowd; thou art of the chosen few," and had opened the roof above his head like a trap in the sky, and shot him up through this opening, causing him to appear, wild and unexpected, in the midst of princes and rulers.

Then suddenly he saw around him, instead of people who applauded him, lords who cursed him. Mournful metamorphosis! Ignominious ennobling! Rude spoliation of all his former happiness! Destruction of his life by derision! Gwynplaine, Clancharlie, the lord, the mountebank, torn out of his old lot, as well as out of his new lot, by the beaks of those eagles.

What availed it that he had begun life by triumphing over obstacles. What had his early triumphs profited him. Alas! the fall must come, ere destiny be complete.

So, half against his will and half with his consent — because after he had done with the wapentake he had had to deal with Barkilphedro, and he had yielded a certain

amount of consent to his abduction—he had forsaken the real for the chimerical; the true for the false; Dea for Josiana; love for pride; liberty for power; labour, poor but proud, for opulence full of unknown responsibilities; the seclusion in which God dwells, for the lurid flames in which demons live; paradise for Olympus!

He had tasted the golden fruit. He was now spitting out the ashes into which it had turned.

Lamentable result! Defeat, failure, ruin, complete overthrow of all his hopes, frustrated by ridicule! Immeasurable disappointment! And what was there for him in the future? If he looked forward to the morrow, what did he see? A drawn sword, the point of which was against his breast, and the hilt in the hand of his brother. He could see nothing but the hideous flash of that sword. Josiana and the House of Lords made up the background in a monstrous *chiaroscuro* full of tragic shadows.

And that brother seemed so brave and chivalrous! Alas! he had hardly seen the Tom-Jim-Jack, who had defended Gwynplaine, the Lord David, who had defended Lord Clancharlie; but he had had time to receive a blow from him and to love him.

He was crushed.

He felt that it was impossible for him to proceed further. Everything had crumbled into ruin about him. Besides, what was the good of it? Unutterable weariness dwells in the depths of despair.

The trial had been made. It could not be repeated.

Gwynplaine was like a gamester who has played all his trumps away, one after another. He had allowed himself to be lured to a fearful gambling table without knowing what he was about; for—so subtle is the poison of illusion!—he had staked Dea against Josiana, and had gained a monster; he had staked Ursus against a family,

and had gained only insult; he had staked his mountebank platform against his seat in the House of Lords, and in place of the applause which had been his, he had gained only insult. His last card had fallen on that fatal green cloth, the deserted bowling-green. Gwynplaine had lost. Nothing remained but to pay. Pay, wretched man!

The thunder-stricken lie still. Gwynplaine remained motionless. Any one watching him from afar, in the shadow, rigid and motionless, might have fancied that he saw an upright stone.

Hell, the serpent, and reverie are all tortuous. Gwynplaine was now descending the sepulchral spirals of profound thought.

He reviewed the strange world of which he had just caught a glimpse, with the cold scrutiny of a last look. Marriage, but no love; family, but no brotherly affection; riches, but no conscience; beauty, but no modesty; justice, but no equity; order, but no equilibrium; authority, but no right; power, but no intelligence; splendour, but no refinement. Inexorable balance-sheet! He went throughout the strange vision in which his mind had been plunged. He examined successively destiny, situation, society, and himself. What was destiny? A snare. Rank? Despair. Society? Hatred. And himself? A defeated man. In the depths of his soul he cried: Society is a step-mother; Nature is the real mother. Society is the world of the flesh, Nature is the world of the soul. The one leads to the coffin, to the deal box in the grave, to the earth-worms, and ends there. The other tends to expanded wings, to transformation into the morning light, and to ascent into celestial spheres where life begins again under new and much more favourable conditions.

At last a paroxysm came over him, like a sweeping surge. At the close of life there is always a final flash,

in which everything stands clearly revealed once more. The judge meets the accused face to face. Gwynplaine reviewed all that society and all that Nature had done for him. How kind Nature had been to him! How she, who is the soul, had succoured him! Every blessing had been taken from him, even his features. The soul had given them all back, — all, even his features; because there was on earth a heavenly blind girl intended expressly for him, who could not see his ugliness, and believed him beautiful beyond comparison.

And it was from these blessings that he had allowed himself to be separated. It was from this adorable girl, from his beloved one, from her tenderness, from her divine gaze, the only gaze on earth that saw his real nature, that he had strayed! Dea was his sister, because he felt between them the grand fraternity of the sky, — that mystery in which the whole of heaven is comprised. Dea, when he was a little child, was his holy virgin; because every child has his virgin, and in childhood a marriage of souls is always contracted in the fulness of innocence. Dea was his wife, for theirs was the same nest on the highest branch of the deep-rooted tree of Hymen. Dea was still more, — she was his light, for without her the entire earth was a void and nothingness; and in his eyes her head was encircled with a dazzling halo. What would become of him without Dea? What could he do with all that was himself? There was no part of him that could live without her. How, then, could he have lost sight of her for a moment? Oh, unfortunate man! He had allowed distance to intervene between himself and his star; and, by the unknown and terrible laws of gravitation in such matters, distance means immediate loss.

Where was she his star? Dea! Dea! Dea! Dea! Alas! he had lost her light. Take away the star, and

what is the sky? A dark, shapeless mass. And why had all this befallen him? Oh, what happiness had once been his! For him God had made another Eden. Too close was the resemblance, alas! even to allowing the serpent to enter; but this time it was the man who had been tempted. He had been enticed outside, and then, through a frightful snare, had fallen into a chaos of murky laughter, which was hell. Oh, misery! misery! How loathsome all that had fascinated him seemed now. Even that Josiana, frightful creature!—half beast, half goddess. Gwynplaine was now on the rear side of the eminence and could see the other aspect of that which had so dazzled him. It was baleful! His peerage was deformed; his coronet was hideous; his velvet robe, a funeral garment. The unwholesome and treacherous air of palaces seemed to poison all who breathed it, and turn them mad. How brilliant the rags of the mountebank Gwynplaine appeared to him now! Alas! where was the Green Box, the poverty, the joy, the sweet wandering life,—wandering together, like the swallows? They were never separated then; he saw her every minute, morning and evening. At table their knees, their elbows, touched; they drank from the same cup; the sun shone through the pane, but it was only the sun, and Dea was Love. At night they slept not far from each other; and a vision of Dea came and hovered over Gwynplaine, and a vision of Gwynplaine spread itself mysteriously above the head of Dea. When they woke they never could be quite sure that they had not exchanged kisses in the azure mist of dreams. Dea was the embodiment of innocence; Ursus, the personification of wisdom. They wandered from town to town; and they had for their sustenance and for a stimulant the hearty applause of the people. They were angel vagabonds, with enough human nature in their composition

for them to tread the earth and not enough of wings to fly away; and now all had vanished. Where was it gone? Could it be possible that it had been effaced forever? What breath from the tomb had swept over them?

Alas! the inexorable and relentless power of the great casts its shadow over all, and can accomplish anything. What had been done to them? And he had not been there to protect them, to fling himself in front of them, to defend them, as a lord, with his title, his peerage, and his sword; as a mountebank, with his fists and his nails! And here arose a bitter reflection, — perhaps the most bitter of all. Well! no; he could not have defended them. It was he himself who had destroyed them; it was to save him, Lord Clancharlie, from them; it was to protect his dignity from possible contact with them, that the infamous omnipotence of society had crushed them. The best way in which he could protect them would be to disappear, and then the cause of their persecution would cease. He out of the way, they would be allowed to live in peace. Into what dangerous channel were his thoughts beginning to run! Oh, why had he ever allowed himself to be separated from Dea? Was not his first duty towards her? To serve and to defend the people had been his idea; but Dea was the people. Dea was an orphan; she was blind; she represented humanity. Oh, what had they done to them? Cruel sting of remorse! His absence had left the field open for the catastrophe. He would have shared their fate; either they would have been taken and carried away with him, or he would have been swallowed up with them. And now, what would become of him without them? Gwynplaine without Dea, — was that possible? Without Dea was to be without everything. It was all over now. His beloved was lost to him forever! His life was virtually ended, for condemned and damned as Gwyn-

plaine was, what was the use of further struggle? He had nothing more to expect either of men or of heaven. Dea! Dea! Where was Dea? Lost! What! lost? He who has lost his soul can regain it through but one outlet, — death.

Gwynplaine, tragically distraught, placed his hand firmly on the parapet, as on a solution, and looked at the river.

It was his third night without sleep. A violent fever was raging in his veins. His thoughts, which he believed to be clear, were blurred. He felt an imperative need of sleep. He remained for a few instants leaning over the water. Its dark depths offered him a tranquil resting-place, — the peace of oblivion. Sinister temptation!

He took off his coat, which he folded and placed on the parapet; then he unbuttoned his waistcoat. As he was about to take it off, his hand struck against something in the pocket. It was the red book which had been given him by the librarian of the House of Lords; he drew it out, examined it in the dim light, and finding a pencil in it, he hastily wrote on the first blank page he came to, these lines: —

“I depart. Let my brother David take my place, and may he be happy!”

Then he signed, “FERMAIN CLANCHARLIE, Peer of England.”

He took off his waistcoat and placed it on the coat; then his hat, which he placed upon the waistcoat. In the hat he laid the red book, open at the page on which he had written. Seeing a stone lying on the ground near by, he picked it up and placed it in the hat.

Having done all this, he glanced up at the dark heavens above him; then his head sank slowly, as if drawn by an invisible thread towards the abyss.

There was a hole in the masonry near the base of the parapet; he placed his foot in it, so that his knee reached above the top, and little or no effort would be required to spring over it. He clasped his hands behind his back and leaned over.

“So be it,” he murmured, fixing his eyes on the deep waters below.

Just then he felt a tongue licking his hands.

He started violently, and turned around.

Homo was behind him.

CONCLUSION.

THE NIGHT AND THE SEA.

CHAPTER I.

A WOLF MAY PROVE A GUARDIAN ANGEL.

GWYNPLAINE uttered a cry.
“Is that you, Homo?”

Homo wagged his tail. His eyes gleamed in the darkness. He was looking earnestly at Gwynplaine.

Then he began to lick his hands again. For a moment Gwynplaine was like a drunken man, so great was the revulsion of feeling caused by a return of hope.

Homo! What an apparition! During the last forty-eight hours Gwynplaine had experienced every variety of the thunder-bolt. But one was left to strike him, — the thunder-bolt of joy. And it had just fallen upon him. Certainty, or at least the clew which led to it, regained; the sudden intervention of a mysterious clemency on the part of destiny; life suddenly exclaiming, “Behold me!” in the very depths of the grave, and bringing back health and deliverance at the very moment when all expectancy had ceased; a place of safety discovered at the most critical moment in the midst of crumbling ruins, — Homo meant all this to Gwynplaine. The wolf seemed to him enveloped in a halo of light.

Meanwhile, Homo had turned round and advanced a few steps, looking back all the while to see if Gwyn-

plaine was following him. As Gwynplaine was doing so, Homo wagged his tail, and went on.

The road taken by the wolf skirted the sloping quay formed by the Effroc Wall. This slope led down to the Thames; and Gwynplaine, guided by Homo, descended it.

Homo turned his head now and then, to make sure that Gwynplaine was behind him.

In situations of supreme importance nothing approaches so near omniscient intelligence as the simple instinct of a faithful animal.

There are cases in which the animal feels that he should follow his master; others, in which he should precede him. Then the animal assumes charge of the man, as it were. His imperturbable scent endows him with the power to see in what is twilight to us. He feels a vague obligation to become a guide. Does he know that there is danger ahead, and that he can help his master to overcome it? Possibly not, but perhaps he does. In any case, Some One knows it for him. As we have already said, it often happens in life that some help which came from below, as we supposed, really came from above. Can mortal man distinguish all the mysterious forms assumed by God?

What did this animal personate? Providence.

Having reached the river, the wolf led the way along the narrow strip of land that bordered the Thames.

Without noise or bark he hastened on his way. Homo always followed his instinct, and did his duty, but with all the caution of an outlaw.

About fifty yards farther on, he stopped. A wooden platform appeared on the right. At the end of this platform, which was a kind of wharf on piles, a dark object could be dimly distinguished. It was a tolerably large vessel. On the deck of this vessel, near the prow, was a glimmer, like the last flicker of a night-lamp.

The wolf, having finally assured himself that Gwynplaine was there, bounded on the wharf. It was a long platform, floored and tarred, and supported by a network of joists, under which flowed the river. Homo and Gwynplaine soon reached the edge.

The ship moored to the wharf was a Dutch vessel, of the Japanese style, with two decks, fore and aft, and between them an open hold, reached by a ladder in which the cargo was stored. There was thus a forecastle and an after-deck, as in our old river boats, with a space between them ballasted by the freight. The paper boats made by children are of similar shape. Under the decks were the cabins, which opened into the hold and were lighted by glazed port-holes. In stowing the cargo a passage-way was left between the bales of which it consisted. These vessels had a mast at each end. The foremast was called Paul, the mainmast Peter, the ship being sailed by these two masts as the Church was guided by her two apostles. A gangway extended like a Chinese bridge, from one deck to the other, over the centre of the hold. In bad weather, two flaps on either side of this gangway were lowered on hinges, thus forming a roof over the hold; so that the ship, in bad weather, was hermetically closed. These sloops, being of very massive build, had a beam for a tiller, the strength of the rudder being necessarily proportioned to the weight of the vessel. Three men — the skipper and two sailors, with a cabin-boy — sufficed to navigate these ponderous sea-going machines. The decks, fore and aft, were, as we have already said, without bulwarks. The great lumbering hull of this vessel was painted black, and upon it, visible even in the night, stood out, in white letters, the words, "Vograat, Rotterdam."

About that time many stirring events had occurred at sea, — among others, the defeat of the Baron de Pointi's

eight ships off Cape Carnero, which had obliged the whole French fleet to take refuge at Gibraltar; so that the Channel was swept clear of every man-of-war, and merchant vessels were able to sail backwards and forwards between London and Rotterdam without a convoy.

The vessel on which the name "Vograat," was inscribed and which was now close to Gwynplaine, lay with her main-deck almost level with the wharf. There was but one step to descend, and Homo with one bound, and Gwynplaine with one stride, were on board.

The deck was clear, and no stir was perceptible. The passengers, if there were any, were probably already on board, the vessel being ready to sail, and the cargo stowed, as was apparent from the state of the hold, which was full of bales and cases. But they were, doubtless, asleep in the cabins below, as the departure was to take place during the night. In such cases, the passengers do not appear on deck until they wake the following morning. As for the crew, they were probably having their supper in the men's cabin, while awaiting the hour fixed for sailing, which was now rapidly approaching. Hence, the silence on the two decks connected by the gangway.

The wolf had almost run across the wharf; once on board, he slackened his pace into a discreet walk. He still wagged his tail, — no longer joyfully, however, but with the sad and feeble wag of an animal troubled in mind. Still preceding Gwynplaine, he passed along the after-deck, and across the gangway.

Gwynplaine, on reaching the gangway, perceived a faint light in front of him. It was the same he had seen from the shore. There was a lantern on the deck, close to the foremast, by the gleam of which was outlined in black, against the grey background of the night, what Gwynplaine instantly recognized as the old four-wheeled van belonging to Ursus.

This poor wooden tenement, cart and hut combined, in which his childhood had been passed, was fastened to the foot of the mast by strong ropes. Having been so long unused, it had become dreadfully rickety; it leaned feebly over on one side; moreover, it was suffering from that incurable malady, — old age. The materials of which it was composed were all rotten. The iron was rusty, the leather torn, the wood-work worm-eaten. There were cracks across the window in front, through which a ray from the lantern shone. The wheels were warped. The sides, the floor, and the axletrees seemed worn out with fatigue. Altogether, it presented an indescribable appearance of beggary and decay. The shafts, which were tied up, looked like two arms raised heavenward. The whole thing was in a state of dismemberment. Under it dangled Homo's chain.

Does it not seem as if the laws and promptings of Nature would have led Gwynplaine to rush headlong forward, now that happiness and lover were once more within his reach? So they would, except in a case of deep terror like his. But he who emerges, shattered in nerve and uncertain of his way, from a series of dire catastrophes, each of which has been a fresh disappointment, is prudent even in his joy, and hesitates, lest he should bear the fatality of which he has been the victim to those whom he loves, feeling that some evil contagion may still hang about him, and so advancing towards happiness with wary steps. The gates of paradise may re-open; but before he enters, he examines the ground carefully.

So Gwynplaine, staggering under the weight of his emotion, paused and gazed around him. The wolf went and lay down silently by his chain.

CHAPTER II.

BARKILPHEDRO, HAVING AIMED AT THE EAGLE, BRINGS
DOWN THE DOVE.

THE step of the little van was down, the door ajar; there was no one within. The dim light which stole through the pane in front revealed the interior of the van in a sort of melancholy *chiaroscuro*. The inscriptions of Ursus, glorifying the greatness of Lords, were distinctly visible on the dilapidated boards, which formed both the outer wall and the inside wainscotting. On a nail, near the door, Gwynplaine saw his leather gorget and his cape, as the clothes of a corpse are hung up in a dead-house. He himself had neither coat nor waistcoat on.

Behind the van there was something lying on the deck at the foot of the mast, dimly lighted by the lantern. It was a mattress, of which he could see but one corner. Some one was probably lying on this mattress, for he could see a shadow move.

He could also hear some one talking, so hiding behind the van, Gwynplaine listened.

It was Ursus' voice he heard.

That voice, so harsh in its upper, so tender in its lower, pitch; that voice which had so often upbraided Gwynplaine, but which had taught him so well, had lost all its wonted vivacity and clearness of tone. It was husky and low, and died away in a sigh at the end of every sentence. It bore but a faint resemblance to

the firm voice of old. It was the voice of one from whom all hope had fled. A voice may become a ghost.

Ursus seemed to be engaged in a monologue rather than a conversation. We are already aware, however, that soliloquizing was a habit with him. It was for this reason that he passed for a madman.

Gwynplaine held his breath, so as not to lose a word that Ursus said, and this is what he heard:—

“This is a very dangerous kind of craft, because there are no bulwarks to it. If we were to slip, there is nothing to prevent our going overboard. If we have bad weather, we shall have to take her below, and that will be dreadful. An awkward step, a fright, and we shall have a rupture of the aneurism. I have seen instances of it. O my God! what is to become of us? Is she asleep? Yes. She is asleep. Is she in a swoon? No. Her pulse is pretty strong. She is only asleep. Sleep is a reprieve. It is the best of blindness. What can I do to prevent people from walking about here? Gentlemen, I beg you will make no noise. Do not come near us, if you please. You know a person in delicate health requires great care. She is feverish, you see. She is very young. 'T is a little creature who is rather feverish. I have put this mattress down here so that she may have a little air. I explain all this so that you will be careful. She sank down exhausted on the mattress as if in a swoon. But she is asleep now. I do hope that no one will wake her. I appeal to the ladies, if there are any present. Such a young girl, it is pitiful! We are only poor mountebanks, but I beg a little kindness, and if there is anything to pay for not making a noise, I will pay it. I thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Is there anybody there? No. I don't think there is. My talk is mere waste of breath. So much the better. Gentlemen, I thank you, if you are there;

and I thank you still more if you are not. Her forehead is covered with perspiration. So we must take our places in the galleys again, and resume our chains. Misery is come back. We are sinking again. A hand, a dread hand which we cannot see, but the weight of which we feel ever upon us, has suddenly hurled us back into obscurity and poverty. Be it so. We must bear it. But I will not have her ill. I must seem a fool to talk out loud like this, when I am alone; but she must feel she has some one near her when she wakes. What shall I do if somebody wakes her suddenly? No noise, in the name of Heaven! A sudden shock which would wake her suddenly, would end everything. It will be a pity if anybody comes. I believe every one on board is asleep. Thanks be to Providence for that mercy. And Homo? Where is he, I wonder? In all the confusion I forgot to tie him up. I do not know what I am doing half the time. It is more than an hour since I saw him. I suppose he has gone to look for his supper somewhere ashore. I hope nothing has happened to him. Homo! Homo!"

Homo struck his tail softly on the planks of the deck. "You are here. Oh, you are here! Thank God for that. If Homo had been lost, it would have been too much to bear. She has moved her arm. Perhaps she is going to wake. Be quiet, Homo! The tide is turning. We shall sail directly. I think it will be a fine night. There is no wind: the flag droops. We shall have a good passage. I do not know what moon it is, but there is scarcely a movement in the clouds. There will be no swell. It will be a fine night. Her cheek is pale; it is only weakness! No, it is flushed; it is only fever! Stay! It is rosy. She is well! I can no longer see clearly. My poor Homo, I can no longer see distinctly. So we must begin life afresh. We must set

to work again. There are only we two left, you see. We will work for her, both of us! She is our child. Ah, the vessel is moving! We are off! Good-bye, London! Good-evening! good-night! To the devil with horrible London!"

He was right. He heard a dull creaking sound as the vessel moved away from the wharf. A man, the skipper, no doubt, just come up from below, was standing on the poop. He had slipped the hawser, and was working the tiller. Looking only at the rudder, as befitted the combined phlegm of a Dutchman and a sailor, listening to nothing but the wind and water, bending against the resistance of the tiller, as he worked it to port or starboard, he looked, in the gloom of the after-deck, like a phantom carrying a beam on its shoulder. He was quite alone. While they were in the river the other sailors were not needed. In a few minutes the vessel was in the middle of the stream, where she drifted tranquilly along. The Thames, little disturbed by the ebbing tide, was calm. Borne onward by the current, the vessel made rapid progress. Behind her the dark outlines of London were fading away in the mist.

Ursus went on talking.

"Never mind, I will give her digitalis. I am afraid that delirium will supervene. She perspires in the palms of her hands. What sin can we have committed in the sight of God? How quickly all this misery has come upon us! Hideous swiftness of evil! A stone falls. It has claws. It is like the hawk swooping down on the lark. That is destiny. There you lie, my sweet child! One comes to London. One says, 'What a fine city! What fine buildings!' Southwark is a magnificent suburb. One settles there. How I loathe the places now! How could one expect me to stay there? I am glad to leave. This is the 30th of April.

I always hated the month of April. There are but two lucky days in April, — the 5th and the 27th; and four unlucky ones, — the 10th, the 20th, the 29th, and the 30th. This has been established beyond a doubt by Cardan's calculations. I wish to-day were over. Departure is a comfort. By dawn we shall be at Gravesend, and to-morrow evening at Rotterdam. Zounds! I will begin life over again in the van. We will draw it, won't we, Homo?"

A light tapping announced the wolf's consent.

Ursus continued: "If one could only get out of a grief as one gets out of a city! Homo, we must try to be happy. Alas! there is always some one to mourn for. A shadow remains on those who survive. You know whom I mean, Homo. There were four of us; now there are only three. Life is only a long loss of those whom we love. They leave a trail of sorrow behind them. Destiny amazes us by its immense stores of intolerable suffering; who, then, can wonder that the old are garrulous? It is despair that makes the dotard, old fellow! Homo, the wind continues favourable. We can no longer see the dome of St. Paul's. We shall pass Greenwich presently. That will be six good miles travelled. Oh, I am glad to turn my back forever on that odious capital, full of priests and magistrates and heartless people. I prefer looking at the leaves rustling in the woods. Her forehead is still covered with perspiration. I don't like those great purple veins in her arm. There is fever in them. Oh, all this is killing me! Sleep, my child. Yes; she is sleeping!"

Suddenly a voice was heard, — an ineffable voice, a far-away voice, which seemed to come at once from the heights and the depths; the voice of Dea.

All that Gwynplaine had felt hitherto seemed nothing. His good angel was speaking. It seemed as though

he heard words spoken from another world in a heaven-like trance.

"He did well to go," the voice said. "This world was not worthy of him. But I must go with him. Father, I am not ill; I heard you speak just now. I am comfortable, very comfortable. I was asleep. Father, I shall soon be happy."

"My child," said Ursus, in a voice of anguish; "what do you mean by that?"

"Father, do not mourn for me," was the only answer.

She paused, as if to take breath, and then these few words, uttered very slowly, reached Gwynplaine's ears.

"Gwynplaine is no longer here. Now I am blind indeed. I never knew what night was before. Night is absence."

The voice paused once more, and then continued: "I always feared that he would soar away. I felt that his place was in heaven. He has taken flight suddenly. It was natural that it should end thus. The soul flies away like a bird. But the nest of the bird was in the heavenly height where dwells the Great Loadstone, who draws all towards Him. I know where to find Gwynplaine. I have no doubt about the way. Father, it is up yonder. Later on you will join us, and Homo, too."

Homo, hearing his name pronounced, tapped his tail softly against the deck.

"Father," resumed the voice, "you understand that now Gwynplaine is no longer here, all is over. Even if I would remain, I could not, because one must breathe. We must not ask for that which is impossible. I was always with Gwynplaine, so it was quite natural I lived. Now Gwynplaine is no more, I die. One thing is certain: either he must come, or I must go; and as he cannot come back, I am going to him. It is easy to

die. It is not at all difficult. Father, that which is extinguished here shall be rekindled elsewhere. Life in this world is only a heartache. It cannot be that we shall always be so unhappy. When we go to what you call the stars, we shall marry, we shall never part again, and we shall love, love, love, for that is what God is."

"There, there, do not agitate yourself," pleaded Ursus.

The voice continued: "Well, for instance, last year in the spring we were together, and we were happy. How different it is now! I forget what little village we were in, but there were trees, and I heard the linnets singing. We came to London; all was changed. This is no reproach, mind. When one goes to a new place, how is one to know anything about it? Father, do you remember that one day there was a woman in the great box? You said, 'It is a duchess.' I felt sad. I thought it might have been better had we stayed in the little towns. After that Gwynplaine left us. Now my turn has come. Besides, you have told me yourself that when I was very little my mother died, and that I was lying on the ground with the snow falling upon me, and that Gwynplaine, who was also very little then, and alone in the world, like myself, picked me up, and that it was thus that I happened to live; so you cannot wonder that now I should feel it absolutely necessary to go and search the grave to see if Gwynplaine be in it. Because the only thing which exists in life is the heart; and after life, the soul. You hear what I say, father, do you not? What is moving? It seems as if we were in something that is moving, yet I do not hear the sound of wheels."

After a pause the voice added: "I cannot exactly make out the difference between yesterday and to-day. I do not complain. I do not know what has occurred; but something must have happened."

These words, uttered with deep and inconsolable sweetness, and with a sigh which Gwynplaine heard distinctly, wound up thus: "I must go, unless he should return."

"I do not believe in ghosts," Ursus muttered gloomily. "This is a ship," he continued. "You ask why we seem to be moving; it is because we are on board a vessel. Be calm; you must not talk so much. Daughter, if you have any love for me, do not agitate yourself, it will make you feverish. I am so old, I could not bear it if you were to be ill. Spare me! Do not be ill!"

Again the voice spoke: "What is the use of searching the earth for what we can only find in heaven?"

Ursus replied, with a half attempt at authority: "Be calm. There are times when you seem to have no sense at all. I command you to rest. After all, you cannot be expected to know what it is to rupture a blood-vessel. I should be calm if you were calm. My child, you owe me something as well; for though he picked you up, I sheltered you. You will make me ill. That is wrong. You must calm yourself, and go to sleep. All will come right. I give you my word of honour, all will come right. Besides, it is very fine weather. The night might have been made on purpose. To-morrow we shall be at Rotterdam, which is a city in Holland, at the mouth of the Meuse."

"Father," said the voice, "look here; when two beings have always been together from infancy, their union should not be disturbed, or death must come. It cannot be otherwise. I love you just the same, but I feel that I am no longer altogether with you, although I am as yet not altogether with him."

"Come! try to sleep," urged Ursus.

"I shall have sleep enough soon," the voice answered softly.

"I tell you that we are going to Holland, to Rotterdam, a large and beautiful city," Ursus replied in trembling tones.

"Father," continued the voice, "I am not ill; if you are anxious about that, you may rest easy. I have no fever. I am rather hot; but that is nothing."

"At the mouth of the Meuse —" stammered Ursus.

"I am quite well, father, but look here! I feel that I am going to die!"

"Don't be so foolish," said Ursus. Then he muttered under his breath: "Above all, God forbid that she should have a shock!"

There was a silence. Suddenly Ursus cried out, "What are you doing? Why are you getting up? Lie down again, I implore you."

Gwynplaine shuddered and stretched out his head.

CHAPTER III.

PARADISE REGAINED BELOW.

HE saw Dea. She had just raised herself up on the mattress. She had on a long white dress, carefully closed, and showing only the delicate contour of her throat. The sleeves covered her arms; the folds, her feet. A tracery of blue veins, hot and swollen with fever, was visible on her hands. She was shivering and rocking, rather than reeling, to and fro, like a reed. The lantern threw a flickering light on her beautiful face. Her unbound hair floated over her shoulders. No tears bedewed her cheeks. Her eyes shone brilliantly. She was pale, with that pallor which is like the transparency of a divine life in an earthly face. Her fragile and exquisite form was, as it were, blended and interfused with the folds of her robe. She wavered like the flicker of a flame, while, at the same time, she was dwindling into shadow. Her eyes, opened wide, were resplendent. She was as one just released from the sepulchre; a soul standing in the dawn.

Ursus, whose back only was visible to Gwynplaine, raised his arms in terror.

"Oh, my child! Oh, heavens! She is delirious. Delirium is what I feared most of all. She must have no shock, for that might kill her; yet nothing but a shock can prevent her going mad. Dead or mad,—what a situation! O God! what can I do? My child, lie down; lie down, I say!"

Meanwhile, Dea spoke. Her voice was almost inaudible, as if a cloud had already interposed between her and earth.

"Father, you are wrong. I am not in the least delirious. I hear all you say distinctly. You are telling me that there is a great crowd of people, that they are waiting, and that I must play to-night. I am quite willing. You see that I have my reason; but I do not know what to do, as I am dead, and Gwynplaine is dead. I am coming all the same. I am ready to play. Here I am; but Gwynplaine is no longer here."

"Come, my child," said Ursus, "do as I bid you. Lie down again."

"He is no longer here, — no longer here! Oh, how dark it is!" she moaned.

"Dark," muttered Ursus. "This is the first time she has ever uttered that word!"

Gwynplaine mounted the step of the van as noiselessly as possible, entered it, took down from the nail the cape and collar, put the collar round his neck, and descended from the van, still concealed by the projection of the cabin, the rigging, and the mast.

Dea continued murmuring. She moved her lips, and by degrees the murmur became a melody. In broken snatches, and with the interrupted cadences of delirium, she chanted the strange appeal she had so often addressed to Gwynplaine in "Chaos Vanquished." She sang, but her voice was as low and uncertain as the humming of a bee.

"Noche, quita te de alli!
El alba canta." . . . ¹

She stopped.

"No, it is not true. I am not dead. What was I saying? Alas! I am alive. I am alive; he is dead. I

¹ "Depart, O night! sings the dawn."

am below ; he is above. He is gone. I remain. I shall hear his voice no more, nor his footstep. God, who had given us a little paradise on earth, has taken it away. Gwynplaine, it is over. I shall never feel you near me again. Never! And his voice! I shall never hear his voice again." And she sang:—

"Es menester a cielos ir —
Deja, quiero,
A tu negro
Caparazon." ¹

She stretched out her hand, as if seeking something in space on which she might rest.

Gwynplaine mysteriously appearing by the side of Ursus, who had suddenly become as though petrified, knelt before her.

"Never," said Dea, "never shall I hear him again."

She began, wandering, to sing again:—

Deja, quiero,
A tu negro
Caparazon."

Then she heard a voice—even the beloved voice—answering,—

"O ven! ama!
Eres alma,
Soy corazon." ²

And at the same instant Dea felt beneath her hand the head of Gwynplaine. She uttered an indescribable cry.
"Gwynplaine!"

¹ "We must go to heaven.
Take off, I entreat thee,
Thy black cloak."

² "O come and love!
Thou art the soul,
I am the heart."

A light, as of a star, illumined her pale face, and she tottered. Gwynplaine caught her in his arms.

"Alive!" cried Ursus.

"Gwynplaine, Gwynplaine!" Dea repeated.

And with her head bowed upon Gwynplaine's cheek, she whispered faintly, —

"You have come down to me again; I thank you, Gwynplaine."

And seated on his knee, she lifted up her head. Wrapt in his embrace, she turned her sweet face towards him, and fixed those eyes so full of light and shadow upon him as if she could really see him.

"It is you," she said.

Gwynplaine silenced her sobs with kisses. There are exclamations which are at once words, cries, and sobs, in which all ecstasy and all grief are mingled. They have no meaning, and yet tell all.

"Yes! it is! It is I, Gwynplaine, of whom you are the soul. Do you hear me? I, whose child, whose wife, whose star, whose breath of life you are! I, to whom you are eternity itself. It is I. I am here. I hold you in my arms. I am alive. I am yours. Oh, when I think that in a moment all would have been over — one minute more — but for Homo! I will tell you everything. How near hope is to despair! Dea, we live again! Dea, forgive me! Yes, yours forever. You are right. Touch my forehead. Make sure that it is I. If you only knew — but nothing can separate us now. I rise out of hell, and ascend into heaven. Am I not with you? You said that I descended. Not so; I re-ascend. Once more with you! Forever! — I tell you forever. Together! We are together! Who would have believed it? We have found each other again. All our troubles are past. Before us now, there is nothing but enchantment. We will renew our happy life, and we will shut the door so

fast that misfortune shall never enter again. I will tell you all. You will be astonished. The vessel has sailed. No one can prevent that now. We are on our voyage, and at liberty. We are going to Holland. We will marry. I have no fear about gaining a livelihood. What can hinder it? There is nothing to fear. I adore you!"

"Not so quick," stammered Ursus.

Dea, trembling, and with the delicacy of an angel's touch, passed her hand over Gwynplaine's face. He heard her say to herself, —

"It is thus that God is made."

Then she touched his clothes.

"The esclavine," she said, "the cape. Nothing changed. All as it was before."

Ursus, bewildered, delighted, smiling, drowned in tears, gazed at them, and addressed this aside to himself: —

"I don't understand it in the least. I am a stupid idiot, — I, who saw him carried to the grave! I cry, and I laugh. That is all I know. I am as great a fool as if I were in love myself. And that is just what I am. I am in love with them both. Old fool! Too much emotion! too much emotion! It is what I was afraid of. No, it is exactly what I wished for. Gwynplaine, be careful of her. Yes, let them kiss! It is no affair of mine. I am but a spectator. I am of no account whatever here, evidently, and yet it strikes me that I am. Bless you, my children!"

While Ursus was thus communing with himself, Gwynplaine exclaimed, —

"Dea, you are too beautiful! I don't know where my wits were these last few days. Truly, there is no one to compare with you on earth. I see you again, but as yet I can hardly believe it. In this ship! But tell me, how did it all happen? To what a condition they have

reduced you! But where is the Green Box? They have robbed you. They have driven you away. It is infamous. Oh, I will avenge you! I will avenge you, Dea! They shall answer for it. I am a Peer of England."

Ursus, as if stricken by a planet full in his breast, drew back, and looked at Gwynplaine attentively.

"It is certain that he is not dead; but can he have gone mad?" And he listened to him, dubiously.

"Have no fears, Dea," Gwynplaine resumed; "I will carry my complaint to the House of Lords."

Ursus looked at him again, and tapped his forehead with the tip of his forefinger. Then making up his mind:—

"It is all one to me," he said. "It will be all right, all the same. Be as mad as you like, my Gwynplaine. It is one of the rights of man. As for me, I am happy; but how did all this come about?"

The vessel continued to sail smoothly and swiftly on. The night grew darker and darker. The mists, which came inland from the ocean, were invading the zenith, from which no breeze blew them away. Only a few large stars were visible, and they disappeared one after another, so that soon there were none at all, and the whole sky was dark and soft. The river broadened until the banks on each side were nothing but two thin brown lines mingling with the gloom. Out of all this shadow rose a profound peace. Gwynplaine, half kneeling, held Dea in his embrace. They talked, they wept, they kissed, they whispered in a mad dialogue of joy. How are we to paint thee, O joy!

"My life!"

"My heaven!"

"My love!"

"My whole happiness!"

"Gwynplaine!"

"Dea, I am drunk with joy. Let me kiss your feet."

"So it is really you?"

"I have so much to say to you now that I do not know where to begin."

"One kiss!"

"O my wife!"

"Gwynplaine, do not tell me that I am beautiful. It is you who are handsome."

"I have found you again. I hold you to my heart. It is true. You are mine. I do not dream. Is it possible? Yes, it is. I live again. If you only knew! I have met with all sorts of adventures. Dea!"

"Gwynplaine, I love you!"

And Ursus murmured, —

"Mine is the joy of a grandfather."

Homo, having come out from under the van, was going from one to the other discreetly, exacting no attention, licking them left and right, — now Ursus' thick shoes, now Gwynplaine's cape, now Dea's dress, now the mattress. This was his way of giving his blessing.

They had passed Chatham and the mouth of the Medway, and were now approaching the sea. The serenity of the atmosphere was such that the passage down the Thames was being made without trouble; no manœuvring was needful, nor was any sailor called on deck. At the other end of the vessel the skipper, still alone, was steering. He was the only man aft. At the bow, the lantern lighted up the happy group of beings who, from the depths of misery, had been suddenly raised to happiness by such an unexpected meeting.

CHAPTER IV.

NAY; ON HIGH!

SUDDENLY Dea, disengaging herself from Gwynplaine's embrace, arose. She pressed both her hands against her heart, as if to still its throbbings.

"What is wrong with me?" she exclaimed. "There is something the matter. Joy is suffocating. No, it is nothing! That is lucky. Your reappearance, O my Gwynplaine, has overwhelmed me,—overwhelmed me with happiness. All this heavenly joy which you have aroused in my heart has intoxicated me. When you were absent, I felt myself dying. The life which was forsaking me you have brought back. I felt as if something was being torn away within me. It must have been only the shadows, for I feel life dawning in my brain,—a glowing life, a life of fever and delight. This life which you have just given me is wonderful. It is so heavenly, that it makes me suffer a little. It seems as if my soul is enlarging and can scarcely be retained in my body. I feel something like a beating of wings within my breast. I feel strangely, but oh, so happy! Gwynplaine, you have saved my life!"

She flushed, became pale, then flushed again, and fell.

"Alas!" said Ursus, "you have killed her."

Gwynplaine extended his arms towards Dea. Extreme anguish suddenly superseding extreme ecstasy,—what a shock! He would himself have fallen, had he not had to support her.

"Dea!" he cried, shuddering, "what is the matter?"

"Nothing," said she; "I love you!"

She lay in his arms limp, like a piece of linen; her hands were hanging down helplessly.

Gwynplaine and Ursus placed Dea on the mattress.

"I cannot breathe lying down," she said feebly.

They lifted her up.

"Fetch a pillow," said Ursus.

"What for? I have Gwynplaine," she replied.

She laid her head on the shoulder of Gwynplaine, who was sitting behind her, supporting her, his eyes wild with grief.

"Oh, how happy I am!" she exclaimed.

Ursus took her wrist, and counted the pulsation of the artery. He did not shake his head. He said nothing, nor did he express his opinion except by the rapid movement of his eyelids, which were opening and shutting convulsively, as if to prevent a flood of tears from bursting forth.

"What is the matter?" asked Gwynplaine.

Ursus placed his ear against Dea's left side.

Gwynplaine repeated his question eagerly, fearful of the answer.

Ursus looked at Gwynplaine, then at Dea. His face was livid.

"We must be just opposite Canterbury," he stammered. "The distance from here to Gravesend cannot be very great. We shall have fine weather all night. We need fear no attack at sea, because the fleets are all on the coast of Spain. We shall have a good passage."

Dea, growing paler and paler, clutched her robe convulsively. She heaved a sigh of inexpressible sadness, and murmured: —

"I know what this is, — I am dying!"

Gwynplaine rose in terror. Ursus held Dea.

"Die! You die! No; it shall not be! You cannot

die! Die now! Die at once! It is impossible! God is not so ferociously cruel as to give you and to take you back in the same moment. No; such a thing cannot be. It would make one lose all faith in him. Then, indeed, would everything be a snare,—the earth, the sky, the cradles of infants, the human heart, love, the stars above us. God would be a traitor, and man a dupe. There would be nothing in which one could believe. It would be an insult to creation. Everything would be chaos. You do not know what you are saying, Dea. You shall live! I command you to live! You must obey me! I am your husband and your master; I forbid you to leave me! Oh, heavens! Oh, wretched man that I am! No, it cannot be; I remain in the world after you! Why, it is as monstrous as that there should be no sun! Dea! Dea! arouse yourself. It is but a moment of passing pain. One feels a shudder at times, and thinks no more about it. It is absolutely necessary that you should get well and cease to suffer. *You* die! What have I done to you? The very thought of it drives me mad. We belong to each other, and we love each other. You have no reason for going! It would be unjust! Have I committed any crime? Besides, you have forgiven me. Oh, you would not make me desperate; have me become a villain, a madman; drive me to perdition? Dea, I entreat you! I conjure you! I supplicate you! Do not die!”

And clinching his hands in his hair, agonized with fear, stifled with tears, he threw himself at her feet.

“My Gwynplaine,” said Dea, “it is no fault of mine.”

There rose to her lips a red froth, which Ursus wiped away with a fold of her robe, before Gwynplaine, who was prostrate at her feet, could see it.

Gwynplaine took her feet in his hands, and implored her in all kinds of confused words.

"I tell you, I will not have it! *You* die? I have no strength left to bear it. Die? Yes; but both of us together—not otherwise. *You* die, my Dea? I will never consent to it! My divinity! my love! Do you not understand that I am with you? I swear that you shall live! Oh, you cannot have thought what will become of me after you are gone. If you had any idea how necessary you are to me, you would see that it is absolutely impossible! Dea, you see I have no one but you! The most extraordinary things have happened to me. You will hardly believe that I have just explored the whole of life in a few hours! I have found out one thing,—that there is nothing in it! You exist! if you did not, the universe would have no meaning. Stay with me! Have pity on me! Since you love me, live. If I have just found you again, it is to keep you! Wait a little longer; you cannot leave me like this, now that we have been together only a few minutes! Do not be impatient! Oh, Heaven, how I suffer! You are not angry with me, are you? You know that I could not help going when the wapentake came for me. You will breathe more easily presently, see if you do not. Dea, all has been set right. We are going to be happy. Do not drive me to despair, Dea! I have not wronged you!"

These words were not spoken, but sobbed. They burst from his breast,—now in a lament which might have attracted the dove, now in a roar which might have made lions recoil.

Dea answered him in a voice growing weaker and weaker, and breaking at almost every word.

"Alas! it is of no use, my beloved! I see that you are doing all you can. An hour ago I wanted to die; now I do not. Gwynplaine! my adored Gwynplaine! how happy we have been! God placed you in my life,

and now he takes me out of yours. You see, I am going. You will remember the Green Box, won't you; and poor little blind Dea? You will remember my song? Do not forget the sound of my voice, and the way in which I said, 'I love you!' I will come back and say it to you again, in the night, while you are asleep. Yes, we found each other again; but it was too much happiness. It was to end at once. It is decreed that I am to go first. I love my father, Ursus, and my brother, Homo, very dearly. You are all so good. There is no air here. Open the window. My Gwynplaine, I did not tell you, but I was jealous of a woman who came one day. You do not even know of whom I speak. Is it not so? Cover my arms, I am a little cold. And Fibi and Vinos, where are they? One gets to love everybody. One feels a friendship for all those who have been connected with one's happiness. We have a kindly feeling towards them for having witnessed our joy. Why has all this passed away? I have not clearly understood what has happened during the last two days. Now I am dying. Leave me in my dress. When I put it on, I foresaw that it would be my shroud. I wish to keep it on. Gwynplaine's kisses are upon it. Oh, what would I not have given to have lived! What a happy life we led in our poor little van! How we sang! How I listened to the applause! What joy it was never to be separated from each other! It seemed to me that I was living in a cloud with you. I knew one day from another, although I was blind. I knew that it was morning, because I heard Gwynplaine; I felt that it was night, because I dreamed of Gwynplaine. I felt that I was wrapped up in something, which was his soul. We adored each other so rapturously. It is all fading away; and there will be no more songs. Alas, that I cannot live on! You will think of me, my beloved!"

Her voice was growing fainter. Death was stealing away her breath. She folded her thumbs within her fingers, — a sign that her last moments were approaching. It seemed as though the first uncertain utterances of an angel, just created, were blended with the last faltering accents of the dying girl.

"You will think of me, won't you?" she murmured. "It would be very sad to be dead, and to be remembered by no one. I have been wayward at times; I beg pardon of you all. I am sure that, if God had so willed it, we might yet have been happy, my Gwynplaine; for we take up but very little room in the world and we might have earned our bread together in another land. But God has willed it otherwise. I cannot make out in the least why I am dying. I never complained of being blind, so that I cannot have offended any one. I should never have asked for anything, but always to be blind as I was, by your side. Oh, how sad it is to have to part!"

Her words were becoming more and more inaudible, evaporating into each other, as if they were being blown away.

"Gwynplaine," she resumed, "you will think of me, won't you? I shall crave it even when I am dead." "Oh, keep me with you!" she pleaded.

Then, after a pause, she added, —

"Come to me as soon as you can. I shall be very unhappy without you, even in heaven. Do not leave me long alone, my beloved. My paradise is here; above, there is only heaven! Oh, I cannot breathe! My beloved! My beloved! My beloved!"

"Mercy!" cried Gwynplaine, "have mercy, O my God!"

"Farewell!" murmured Dea.

Gwynplaine pressed his lips to her beautiful icy hands. For a moment it seemed as if she had ceased to breathe. Then she raised herself on her elbow, and a strange

splendour flashed from her eyes, and through an ineffable smile her voice rang out clearly : —

“Light!” she cried. “I see!”

She fell back on the mattress, rigid and motionless.

“Dead!” said Ursus.

And the poor old man, as if crushed with despair, bowed his bald head and buried his swollen face in the folds of the gown which covered Dea’s feet, and lay there as if in a swoon.

Gwynplaine’s face was terrible in its agony.

He arose, lifted his eyes, and gazed into the dark heavens above him.

Seen by no one on earth, but looked down upon, perhaps, as he stood there in the darkness, by some invisible presence, he raised his hands heavenward and murmured wildly : —

“I come! I come!”

As he spoke, he strode across the deck, straight towards the side of the vessel, as if beckoned by a vision.

He walked slowly, never once casting down his eyes. A smile came upon his face, such as Dea’s had just worn. He walked straight on, as if watching something. In his eyes was a light like the reflection of a soul seen from afar off.

“Yes!” he cried out. Every step brought him nearer to the vessel’s side.

His gait was rigid, his arms were extended, his head was thrown back, his eyes were fixed, his movements were ghost-like.

He advanced without haste and without hesitation with fatal precision, as though there were no yawning gulf and open grave before him.

“Yes, I will follow you,” he murmured. “I understand the sign that you are making to me.”

His eyes were fixed upon a certain spot in the sky

where the shadow was deepest. The smile was still upon his face.

The sky was perfectly black; there was no star visible in it, and yet he evidently saw one.

He crossed the deck.

A few stiff and ominous steps, and he had reached the very edge.

"I come," said he; "Dea, behold, I come!"

One step more, — there was no bulwark, — the void was before him; he strode into it.

He fell.

The night was thick and dull, the water deep. It swallowed him up. He disappeared calmly and silently. No one saw or heard him. The ship sailed on, and the river flowed tranquilly on.

Shortly afterwards the vessel reached the sea.

When Ursus recovered consciousness, he found that Gwynplaine was no longer with him, and he saw Homo by the vessel's edge, baying in the darkness and gazing down into the water.

On the last page of the manuscript is the following note: —

"Finished August 23, 1868, at half-past ten o'clock in the morning, in Brussels, No. 4 Place des Barricades."

This work, most of which was written in Guernsey, was begun in Brussels, July 21, 1866, and finished in Brussels, August 23, 1868.

THE END.

